Expanded coverage in Safety, Maintenance and Operations section — pages 33-61

Amusement TODAY
Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader
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AIMS, IRT, NAARSO annual safety seminars are on tap for 2023

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

UNITED STATES — January begins the amusement industry safety seminars. Following are previews of the first three.

The **2023 AIMS International Safety Seminar** will be at capacity when it kicks off its event on Jan. 8, at the **Galveston Convention Center**, Galveston, Texas. The seminar runs through Jan. 13.

Registration reached 500, capacity, last month. There will be 125 instructors, 348 educational courses, 440 hours of content and 47 sponsors, 44 of which will be exhibiting at the seminar.

"I didn't anticipate that we would hit our capacity, although we were within 50 students of our maximum student capacity last year, so I guess I should have," said **Mary Jane Brewer,** AIMS International Executive Director.

AIMS offers certification levels in maintenance, operations, inspector and aquatics. Attendees build their own schedule, choosing to best suit their needs and desired outcome. Brewer feels there are a number of reasons for the increase, the first being the variety of courses and quality of the educational experience.

"AIMS is fortunate to have the best group of volunteer instructors and subject matter experts available in the amusement industry," Brewer said. "Each year we solicit new and updated course proposals from new and returning instructors and strive to offer the most relevant and up-to-date content possible," she said.

According to Brewer, the AIMS staff and board members "work diligently to provide an opportunity for our students to not only experiment quality classroom education, but to have adequate time during social events, such as the daily happy hours, to networking and learn from their peers and other industry experts."

After a successful 2022 event (above) International Ride Training's 2023 International Ride Operator Certification (iROC) training program is set to take place February 5-9 at Carowinds. The smiles will be back this year as the AIMS International Safety Seminar (right) which kicks off January 8, at the Galveston Convention Center, and runs through January 13, 2022.
COURTESY IRT; AT/GARY SLADE

"Another reason for the success of our seminar is our education partners," she said. "**Ellis & Associates** (aquatics), **International Ride Training** (operations) and the **Outdoor Amusement Business Association** (traveling shows) offer specialized expertise and access to instructors and students that we may not have otherwise been able to reach."

These companies coordinate the curriculum, curate the courses and find the subject matter experts to teach in their respective specialized tracks. Additionally, Brewer said, seminar planners make a great effort to pay attention to industry trends, safety issues and general education needs of the industry and have added new specialized tracks to address those needs.

Last year AIMS introduced the Academy of Amusement Risk Management, Safety and Security (AARMSS) for people working in safety and security management roles in parks.

"We had a full class last year and are on track to do so again in our second year," Brewer said.

There is a new Certified Risk Management, Safety and Security Associate certification, which is being introduced this year and the second-year AARMSS students will sit for the exam at the end of the week in Galveston.

To address the needs of the growing adventure attractions segment of the amusement industry, AIMS created a new Adventure Attractions Track that will debut in 2023.

"We created a committee comprised of experts in the areas of indoor and outdoor adventure attractions and they have worked for a full year to tailor a course of study for this group of operators," Brewer said.

Examples of the Ad-

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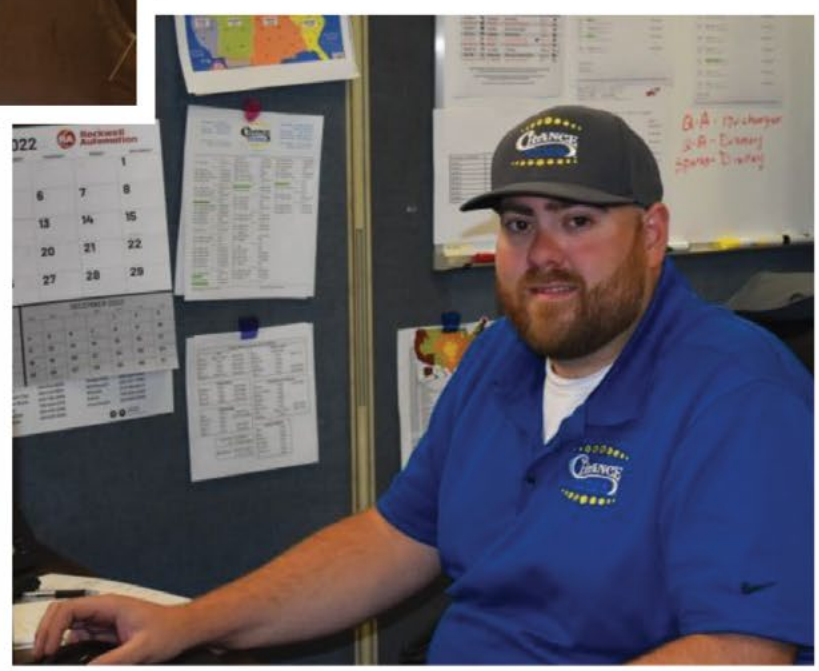

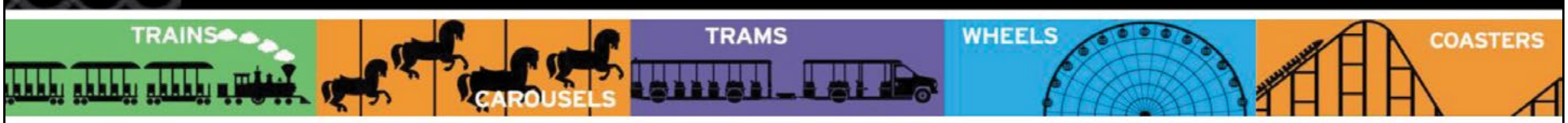

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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

***AT* NOTEBOOK:** *Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com*

A gift not what it seemed

Slade

During the recent International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) Convention and Trade Show in Indianapolis, Ind. this publisher had the good fortune to meet Indiana-native Mary Ann Lienhart Cross, director for the Elkhart County 4H Fair and Hometown Heroes Day.

She is also a member of the board for the Quilts of Valor Foundation (QOVF) in Elkhart, Ind. The Mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover United States service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.

To say that Mary Ann stiches beautiful quilts is not doing her sewing justice. Her patterns, colors and messaging without words is a gift to what she does on her cloth canvas. When visiting with her about this cause one can tell her passion to create these wonderful quilts comes directly from her heart, as well it should be. Our current service members and our veterans don't get the proper respect that they deserve, especially from the younger generation, who probably don't understand what it takes to protect the nation and its freedoms. Perhaps its time for the older generation to start working to get them to understand the military commitment these service members are held to.

If your park, carnival or facility would like to get involved the QOVF, visit www.QOVF.org or email Mary Ann at mcrosshart@frontier.com.

Mary Jane told a story of a gift that became a learning experience. Told to her and her family by her father-in-law. He reminded his loving family that when the day came for the attorney to read his last will, his children would each be receiving their own plot of land separate of the homestead. This news certainly made the family members curious, but none could ever figure out where this plot of land could be. They had never been on such a piece of land with their dad and he never talked about owning land. Perhaps it was out of state somewhere?

The day came when the will was read read by the attorney. The family waited as the reading took place. Then there it was, plots of land were gifted to each family member in the form of cemetery plots!

Quilts and cemetery plots remind all of us of the greater good that is always in front of us. It's also a reminder that if you, your spouse, other members of your family have not created or updated your will, it won't happen automatically, only you can do the right thing. And our amusement and fair industry is certainly a better place with people like Mary Jane Lienhart Cross lending a helping hand.

FLINT'S VIEW: *Bubba Flint*

INDUSTRY VOICE: *Patty Beazley, International Ride Training*

Safety is everyone's job

Beazley

As I sit down to write, we are winding down the 2022 season. A year of travel, safety seminars, new clients, training, and auditing. It's been quite the year. Many colleagues ask how and even why we keep such a hectic schedule. As hectic as it may be, the answer is simple – passion for our amusement industry. The love of teaching individuals how to safely operate rides for our guests on a daily basis. The theory is simple, if you are going to do something, do it to the best of your ability.

The mechanics of a ride are one concern, but when the public is added into the mix the entire process is elevated. We want to keep every rider safe. That's our job. It's more than a part time or summer job for those of us who have chosen a career in this industry. It's the motivation that keeps us going to ensure that all riders have the best possible time on any attraction and that it is done safely. Just like in football, the offensive line protects the quarterback. We want to protect families from any issues that may arise. Regarding safety, we always tell operators to treat the riders as if was one of your family members. Our guests visit our facilities to enjoy themselves. Safety is our concern as riders trust us with their loved ones. My personal commitment is to teach a young operator from my own expertise of experience (and many errors!) and give them the tools to be stellar in their role.

So now, I will go back to planning for 2023 safety seminars for January and February, training and scheduling audits because I'm part of a team of the amusement industry who are passionate and motivated for our ride operators to be their best! And remember, safety is everyone's job!

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columinst(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

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2 MINUTE DRILL

AT: Janice Witherow

Matthew Watson, Sawmill Creek

For **Matthew Watson**, being appointed the general manager of Sawmill Creek Resort, **Cedar Point**'s newest resort property, which is located off the famed Lake Erie peninsula in Huron, Ohio, is a dream come true. With more than 30 years of experience in all facets of the hospitality industry, Matt brings a wealth of experience to his role. Unlike the high-energy of most Cedar Point resorts, Sawmill Creek is situated in a peaceful environment next to a beautiful nature preserve. Its Tom Fazio golf course, marina, restaurants, indoor and outdoor pools, conference space and lovely guest rooms are ideal for a restful getaway. Matt's efficiency, humble spirit and welcoming ways are a good fit!

With more than 30 years of hospitality experience, Matthew Watson is the general manager of Cedar Point's newest resort, Sawmill Creek. COURTESY MATTHEW WATSON

Title: General Manager.

Number of years in the industry: 30+.

Best thing about the industry:
Every day is different and the end goal is to make people happy!

Favorite amusement ride:
The elevators at Sawmill Creek that take our guests to/from the fantastic rooms to our restaurants, bars and activities.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be … Funny question in that I can't imagine doing anything other than working in hospitality.

Biggest challenge facing our industry:
Labor shortages continue to be a challenge with the solution being to educate the upcoming workforce on how rewarding a career in hospitality can be.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is … Being able to take a moment away from the fast-paced environment and connect with someone.

My favorite thing about winter is …
The early-morning quiet after it snows.

The last time I ate fast food was …
Yikes… it's been quite a while!

My all-time best vacation was …
Beach vacation with my family.

Favorite flavor of ice cream: Strawberry.

On a typical Sunday morning, you can find me … Out running for miles and miles.

The one thing I always seem to put off is … Cleaning out the garage.

My "must-see" television show is …
The Mandalorian.

I would best describe my office as …
Minimalistic.

If I was to join the circus, I would hands-down be a … Lion Tamer.

All-time favorite sports team
Philadelphia Eagles.

The most adventurous thing I have done lately is … Move my career from strictly the hospitality sector toward the Amusement Adjacent Hospitality Sector. Lots of new and exciting things to learn and be a part of!

Favorite condiment: Olive oil.

Ultimate movie soundtrack:
Any John Hughes movie.

Do you: stick to your plans or "wing it?" Plan first, adapt always.

The funniest person I know is …
It's a tie between my two daughters.

The celebrity I would most like to have dinner with is … Paul McCartney.

Something make-believe that you wish was real: Flying cars!

In one word, I hope 2023 will be …
Remarkable.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Marquee moment

LUBBOCK, Texas — The marquee for the Panhandle South Plains Fair, Lubbock, Texas, needed restoration (above inset). Reithoffer Shows came to the aide of the fairgrounds taking on a refurbishment project of the 1958 sign. "We really liked the look of the sign," said Rick Reithoffer, owner. His show crew used a man lift to scrape the 30-foot tall by 18-foot wide sign, prime it and paint it with a high-quality paint. "I purchased some LED pucks for it. When we got done (above right), it was everything we thought it could be." Work took place during the middle of the 2022 fair, providing attendees the opportunity to view the progress. The 106th edition of the nine-day fair comes around in late September. COURTESY REITHOFFER SHOWS

SEMINARS

Continued from page 1

venture Attractions Track agenda includes: Fundamentals of Operator and Attendant Safety; Building an Adventure Attraction Safety Program; Patron Education, Communication and Denying Entry; Maintenance Program Requirements; Inspection Program Requirements; Communicating Your Adventure Attraction Safety Program; Hayrides/Trams/Trackless Trains and Bumper Boats/Go Karts; Trampoline Park Inspection Course and a Hands-On Day at **Urban Air Park** in Houston, Texas, just north of Galveston.

In addition to the new Adventure Attractions Track, AIMS seminar planners also added a new eight-hour Introduction to Crowd Science course taught by **G. Keith Still.** Still, a professor, holds a PhD in Crowd Dynamics and has developed and delivered training materials around the world for over 30 years.

Still and the **National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security (NCS4)** partnered in March 2021 to bring this body of work to the United States. The purpose of the courses is to develop greater awareness of how individuals and crowds react and behave in places of public assembly.

The course explores the application of crowd safety and risk analysis techniques to enhance public safety.

Returning for a third year will be the Spanish-language Track, where Spanish-speaking safety professionals from Spain, Mexico and throughout Latin America can gather to listen to safety experts deliver, in their native language, the most current and relevant safety education available in the amusement industry today.

Level I and Level II Spanish-language certification exams are also available at the seminar for those interested in earning an AIMS International Certification in 2023.

Hands-on training at the upcoming NAARSO Annual Safety Seminar will be held this year at the Family Kingdom Amusement Park, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. NAARSO's safety event is set for Jan. 29-Feb. 3. COURTESY FAMILY KINGDOM

The keynote address in 2023 will be presented by 30-year industry veteran **Erik Beard.** Beard is the managing member and general counsel of IRT. He began his career in the ride operations department at **Cedar Fair Entertainment's Cedar Point** and **Worlds of Fun** in 1992 where he spent six years as manager of ride operations and park services.

Beard also worked on the pre-opening operations team at **Universal's Islands of Adventure** where he had direct responsibility for the development of operating procedures for the Lost Continent and Jurassic Park islands and guided numerous attractions through construction, commissioning, and pre-opening training and testing.

Beard joined **Patty Beazley** and **Cindee Huddy** at IRT several years ago. IRT offers a variety of services including being a full-service provider of training and standard operation procedure development and operational consulting for owners/operators of amusement rides and devices and water slides.

IRT also presents the **International Ride Operator Certification (iROC)** training program entitled **Ride Camp Safety School**. The 2023 program is set to take place Feb. 5-9 at **Carowinds** located in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Ride Camp is defined as a "train the trainer" program. There are CEU awarded credits for instructor, trainer and operator levels.

Huddy said the theme for the 2023 Ride Camp Safety School is all about Super Hero's "because we know that ride operators' super power is safety and service"

"We are excited because this year we are offering tracks for Level I for first time attendees, Level II for middle operations management and Level III for the leadership attendees," Huddy said.

There is an action-packed week planned for the International Ride Operator Certification, which includes client only sessions.

"In addition, we have educational sessions that are open to those not receiving the iROC certification," Huddy said. "We hope all those in operational leadership will join us to enhance their super powers."

Some educational sessions in 2023 include ADA 101 for operators, assertiveness skills and practice for leaders, guest service enhancements at the ride, efficiency improvements, train the trainer tips and techniques, aquatic operator procedure practice and many more.

"We serve any business with rides and/or attractions," she said. "We are gearing up for record attendance with over 45 parks in 2023."

Guest speakers at the IRT event this year are: **Shaun McKeogh**, the chief training officer of **Pro Fun Academy**, which teaches sessions on Impact of Company Culture on Staffing, Enhancing Engagement at rides and much more.

Another guest speaker is **Johnnie Williams III**, who has become professionally known as the Encouragement. He is teaching several sessions on some of the best ways to coach operator's teams.

NAARSO will present its **36th Annual Safety Seminar,** Jan. 29-Feb. 3, 2023, at the **Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort**, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The veteran seminar offers course programming and examinations for the following certifications: Limited Specialty; Inspection Certification Level I (basic), Level II (advanced) and Level III (sr); Operations Certification, Level I, Level II and Level III; Operations Certification, Level I, Level II and Level III and Aquatic Operations, Level I.

The first day of the event, Jan. 29, will be full of logistical activities such as registration, membership meetings and seminar orientation.

The seminar Welcome Reception is set for this evening.

Courses begin the next morning and run the remainder of the week. Course topics include: math knowledge; OSHA; wire rope inspections; hydraulics; pneumatics; generators; electric; legal aspects; braking systems; amusement ride chains; accelerometer; rigging; ASTM standards; bearings; ARC flash safety and dark ride and walk -through inspections.

Others include best practices for incident response and investigations; corrosion analyzing; inflatables; communication skills; accessibility; water slide and features; aquatic ASTM; water quality; aquatic inflatables and much more.

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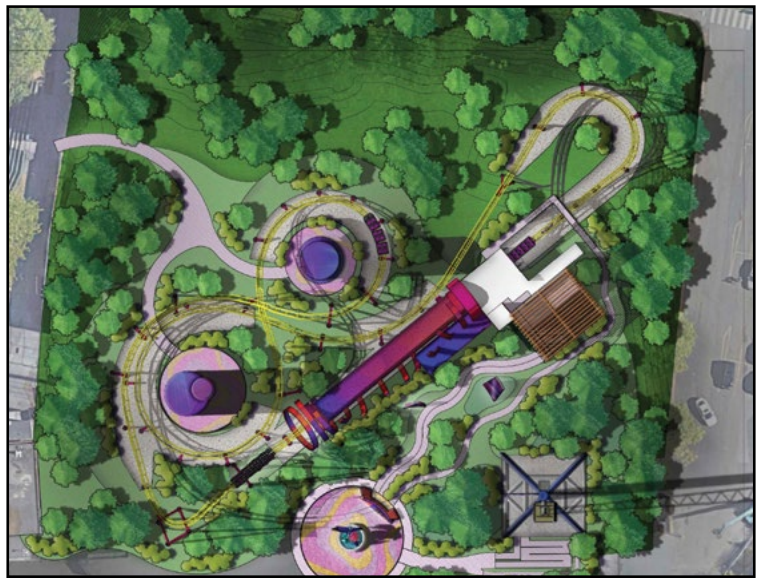
PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

Funland of Fredericksburg adds two rides — page 17 / Indianapolis hosts IAFE Convention — page 21

Playland at the PNE announces launched Zamperla coaster for 2024

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

A sculpture with many animals is planned for the ride's entrance (above). The new coaster will twist and turn on a site formerly occupied by a Corkscrew coaster (below). COURTESY PLAYLAND AT THE PNE



VANCOUVER, B.C. — The **Pacific National Exhibition** (PNE), owners of **Playland Amusement Park**, announced its newest roller coaster in November. But only partially. The park has released several stats, but it is still draping much of the ride in secrecy.

First, the name of the ride has not been provided. A rendering of the entrance portal shows a futuristic sculpture that features multiple animals — a large bird, a bear, a wolf and what appears to be a dolphin's tail.

However, the park has released several details. The coaster will be provided by **Zamperla**, which just recently installed the park's newest attraction, Skybender (a Zamperla Gryphon).

The launched coaster will use linear synchronous motors for its propulsion system. Upon dispatch, riders will be launched with a force of 1.3 Gs from a tunnel and rise to a height of 59 feet for its largest drop.

"Despite the financial effects of the COVID pandemic, the PNE has displayed its resiliency and innovation by not only surviving the pandemic but by pivoting our business throughout it to emerge in a place to invest in this spectacular ride and Playland's future," said PNE President and CEO **Shelly Frost**.

"We are thrilled to be providing Canada's fastest launch coaster to Playland at the Pacific National Exhibition," said Zamperla CEO **Antonio Zamperla**. "Playland and Zamperla have a storied partnership and their team started discussions with us over a year ago about their long-term planning and helping them grow the park's offerings. This year we opened a Gryphon at the park, which was a huge success and allowed Playland to market the first ride of its type in the world."

The site of the project is the location of the park's former Corkscrew coaster, which was retired in 2018. Currently, Playland's largest coaster is a wooden roller coaster usually known simply as "Coaster." It is highly regarded by enthusiasts everywhere as a spectacular example of a classic wooden coaster. The park reopened the ride this summer after more than a year of loving refurbishment. The new launched coaster will be a complement to this classic.

"Our next project [at Playland] is the LSM Launch Coaster, which will be a perfect fit," Zamperla told *Amusement Today*. "It will bring lots of activity to the corner of the park near the amphitheater. We spent a lot of time talking with PNE about ride placement and ensuring that the experience will perfectly complement the park's current lineup of rides and attractions. In addition, it will be that attraction that takes thrills to the next level at Playland."

The coaster will feature a three-car train that seats 12. The restraints are a lap bar pulled down from overhead, which will provide upper-body freedom.

See ZAMPERLA, page 10

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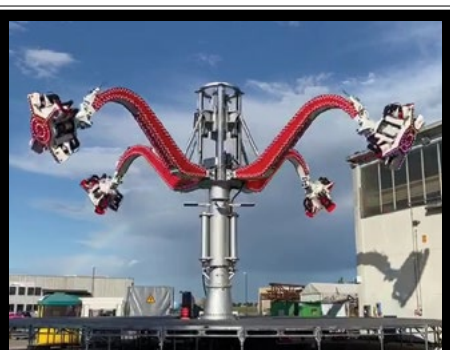
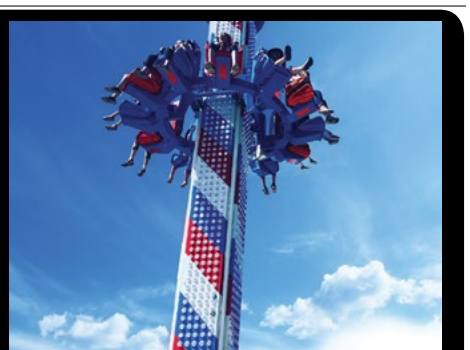

New Fabbri Spider

Gosetto Mirror Maze


Moser Revolving Tower

WHEN THE TIME CAME TO REPLACE OUR WHEEL LIGHTS ONCE AGAIN, WE CERTAINLY DISCUSSED THE PROJECT WITH VARIOUS RIDE LIGHTING COMPANIES, BUT ALL ROADS LED BACK TO EWORKS PRO.

"Since 1994, Knoebels has operated a Holland Ferris Wheel. When the time came to replace our wheel lights once again, we certainly discussed the project with various ride lighting companies, but all roads led back to EWorks Pro. We had previously worked with EWorks Pro to replace the LEDs on our ARM drop tower and were pleased with the outcome. Working with them for our Giant Wheel LEDs provided the same experience: communication was great, installation was timely, the product has been reliable, and the programming allows us to tailor the shows to our needs. The Giant Wheel is one of the most photographed locations in the park and is a key component of every season of our operation, from the 4th of July to Halloween and now our Christmas drive through light display. Since installing the wheel light package, we have worked with EWorks Pro on a third project and anticipate another positive outcome."

Brian Knoebel
Knoebels Amusement Resort Co-Owner

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The coaster vehicle was displayed in Zamerla's exhibit booth during IAAPA Expo 2022. AT/TIM BALDWIN

ZAMPERLA

Continued from page 8

Zamperla revealed the Lightning vehicle at IAAPA Expo 2022.

"The Lightning represents the next step of roller coaster design," said **Adam Sandy**, Zamperla's roller coaster sales and marketing director. "Our engineers have worked to make sure this is the best roller coaster train in the world. We thought about every square centimeter of the Lightning, from the bottom of the wheels to the top of the seat. The Zamperla engineering team kept our core design values at the forefront: safety, ergonomics, the total coast of ownership … and, of course, pure fun for thrill seekers."

According to Sandy, Zamperla's Lightning vehicle is both comfortable and accommodating. "Whenever we go out, we talk to parks; we're not just in and out," he said. "We heard that restraints and seating needed to be more accommodating to guests. People are just smaller, taller, different sizes than they were in the 1950s. We looked at accommodating 95 percent of people 48 inches and taller in the Lightning seat. That was the design intention."

The layout features numerous turns and airtime hills before returning to the station. According to the park, the coaster strikes a balance between fun and thrill. The length of the track is 1,247 feet. A rendering supplied by Playland shows intertwined helices that cross on three levels. The launch that takes place at the start of the ride races through a colorful tunnel and rings.

"We know that the new coaster will be an impressive addition to Playland's ride roster, and we are looking forward to introducing it in 2024," said Frost.

The CA$9 million attraction is the single largest investment that has been made by Playland.

The as-yet-unnamed coaster is being billed as Canada's fastest launched coaster. Top speed will be 45 mph.

Owned by the City of Vancouver, the PNE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to delivering memorable experiences to more than 3 million visitors a year. First-class cultural, music, sporting and family entertainment events take place throughout the year, in addition to the public spaces used for passive recreation. Founded in 1910, the PNE's home is Hastings Park, a multi-facility venue where the organization manages four activity streams: the annual **PNE Fair**, Playland Amusement Park, park care and facility maintenance, as well as its portfolio of year-round events. All revenues generated are invested back onto park space, community programs and educational and entertainment experiences.

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Canada's Wonderland adds largest dining facility: Lazy Bear Lodge

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

With both indoor and outdoor seating (above left), the Lazy Bear Lodge can accommodate up to 500 people. The restaurant was a valuable asset for the park's Winterfest event, all decked out with holiday décor (above right). COURTESY CANADA'S WONDERLAND

VAUGHAN, Ontario — While it opened later in the 2022 season, the new Lazy Bear Lodge: Wood Fired Grille has been a great asset for **Canada's Wonderland**.

"This is a special project for Canada's Wonderland for a few reasons," said Director of Maintenance and Construction **Peter Switzer**, as the restaurant was nearing completion. "One, it's the largest capital investment we've ever made in a dining facility, and two, its location is right in the middle of the park. That's presented us with a unique challenge: finding ways to continue construction and get equipment and materials to the site while the park is in operation."

"The restaurant's location was chosen for a variety of reasons, including guest traffic patterns, available use of land and the allowance for a great view," said Director of Communications **Grace Peacock**. "Lazy Bear Lodge sits atop a hill behind Wonder Mountain, the highest elevation within Frontier Canada and the park, creating a majestic image of the chalet-like building viewable from many vantage points. From the stone patio and upper deck, guests also get a great view looking out to Yukon Striker, Lake LaBerge, the forest and rides of Frontier Canada. We wanted the venue itself, the food and even the view to leave a lasting impression. It's all part of creating that immersive amusement park experience."

The Lazy Bear Lodge opened in late summer. It features seating for 500, with indoor seating on the upper and lower floors. A deck and spacious patio offer outdoor seating. A 16-foot fireplace accents the flagstone and wood design and like the columns was created from granite stone.

Sister park **Cedar Point** also opened a similar huge restaurant in 2022, but an attribute that sets Lazy Bear Lodge apart is that it is multilevel.

"Lazy Bear Lodge is the largest dining facility in the park, and its size and capacity serve to fill a need we had for a big, indoor dining space," Peacock told *Amusement Today*. "Its position on top of a hill allowed for a good use of horizontal space but also vertical as the lower level was built as a walk-out with a lower patio. This extra level provides additional viewing opportunities of Frontier Canada but will also be beneficial as a group catering space."

Previously, this area featured a grassy hill with a few trees and a small building that housed Cookie Café. The café has been rebuilt across the walkway from Lazy Bear Lodge. No rides were removed to make space available.

The menu is Canadian-inspired cuisine featuring locally sourced, farm-fresh ingredients. Two meat smokers infuse flavor into entrees such as Spice-Rubbed Wellington County Smoked Beef Brisket and Smoked Beef Roast.

"We've had very positive feedback from guests: that they're impressed with the building, its architecture and ambiance, the gourmet Canadian menu, the quality of food as well as the speed of service," Peacock said. "Lazy Bear Lodge has certainly hit the mark when it comes to offering our guests a unique, rustic Canadian food experience and, along with the great work of our food and beverage associates, it's been able to effectively accommodate large groups of guests on our busier operating days."

The décor inside has thematic details such as large murals and 15 black bear statues. As Canada's Wonderland is open for a Christmas event, Winterfest, guests found the restaurant decorated in holiday trim making it a perfect fit for the festival.

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Accesso, Cedar Fair Entertainment agree to five-year extension

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
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ORLANDO — **Accesso**, a provider of technology solutions for attractions and venues worldwide, has been helping **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** improve guest experiences since 2011.

The two companies announced a five-year contract extension at the first of November 2022 that will continue this partnership through December 2027. This means Cedar Fair will continue leveraging the fully hosted Accesso Passport eCommerce ticketing suite, which powers online sales for the operator's full portfolio of North American properties.

"With continued use of the Accesso Passport eCommerce ticketing suite, Cedar Fair can seamlessly deliver a mobile-centric shopping experience that strategically drives incremental revenue while enriching the guest experience," said **Andrew Jacobs**, chief commercial officer.

"As technology becomes even more integrated in our day-to-day lives, consumers are increasingly seeking experiences that answer their growing desires for personalization and offers the convenient self-service opportunities the majority of guests are seeking today," Jacobs said.

According to Jacobs, with the fully-hosted Accesso Passport ticketing solution, operators like Cedar Fair are empowered to deliver an intuitive and streamlined eCommerce experience to guests, anytime, anywhere and on any device.

The solution facilitates revenue-driving up-sell and cross-sell opportunities, supporting operators in the sale of everything from season passes and meal deals to parking, as well as multi-park packages.

Accesso's CEO **Steve Brown** said the company was very proud of its long-time partnership with Cedar Fair and he is thrilled to continue it.

Cedar Fair facilities such as Cedar Point (above) will continue to utilize Accesso's technological solutions through 2027. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Brian Witherow, Cedar Fair CFO, said: "In Accesso, we have found a like-minded partner that shares our drive for innovation.

"For more than 150 years, Cedar Fair has proudly served as a world-class entertainment provider for our millions of guests, and we are always seeking new ways to enhance the value of their experience," Witherow said. "We look forward to continuing to work together to deliver an even better, more meaningful digital experience for our valued guests, while driving revenue at our park and resort properties."

Jacobs said Accesso's mobile-first Passport solution processed more than 96 million tickets and reservations for all of Accesso's clients in 2021 alone.

"As our industry's attention has narrowed in on mobile over recent years, we've had many exciting opportunities to help operators of varying sizes, backgrounds and markets adopt the solution in response to evolving consumer demands," Jacobs said.

As technology advances, Accesso's ticketing suite continues to evolve.

The company's team has been proud of its advances and recognitions. It received the "Best New Product - Revenue and Admission Control" accolade as part of IAAPA's 2014 Brass Ring Awards.

The award recognized Accesso's end-to-end update of the Passport platform, which included a fully responsive and cross-device design, admission ticket scanning and a variety of enhancements made across the user experience.

"It's been exciting to continue enhancing the platform over the years to further serve both the needs of our industry partners and the demands of their valued guests," Jacobs said. "This year, we've continued to substantially invest in the size, scope and capabilities of our Business Optimization team, including doubling down on conversion optimizations through strategic A/B testing across key client storefronts."

This past year has been a great year for Accesso and its team. There have been contract extensions with **Village Roadshow Theme Parks** and **Merlin Entertainments**, along with the Cedar Fair extension.

The company also has created new partnerships, including the multifaceted water park partnership with **Pyek Group** and a worldwide virtual queuing partnership with **Parques Reunidos.**

- **accesso.com**
- **cedarfair.com**

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Power	100 kW
Height Req.	36" [91 cm]

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R.C. Cole (right) of Cole Shows Amusements Inc., and Eric Bates, owner of A.R.M. Rides, finalized the purchase Cole made of an A.R.M. Vertigo 300 during the IAAPA Expo 2022. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

A.R.M. has successful Expo, new Vertigo to Cole Shows

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ORLANDO, Fla. — **A.R.M Rides,** based in Wintersville, Ohio, had a strong IAAPA Expo 2022 last November.

A.R.M's owner **Eric Bates** said the company was just about at capacity for 2023.

"We sold four rides at the show," Bates said. "Three of those rides were for 2025."

Bates didn't disclose where the three rides expected to be delivered in 2025 were going, but **R.C. Cole, Cole Shows Amusements Inc.**, out of Covington, Virginia, didn't mind sharing that he bought the ride expected for delivery in 2023.

"I finalized the purchase of a Vertigo just today," Cole said.

He hopes to take delivery of the ride next summer.

Cole purchased A.R.M.'s Vertigo 300, which is 80 feet tall and has a 24-passenger capacity, with eight, three-wide passenger suites. It has a 76-foot operational diameter.

The Vertigo has been a popular A.R.M. ride. It takes riders up a tower while spinning at a quick 10 revolutions per minute high up in the air. It is available in both park and portable models and comes with multiple operational options.

Available Vertigo options aside from the Vertigo 300 that Cole purchased include the following.

- Vertigo 100: 100 feet tall, 24-passenger dual seat (12 side-by-side passenger suites), with a 76-foot operational diameter;
- Vertigo 200: 80 feet tall, 16-passenger dual seat (12 side-by-side passenger suites), with a 76-foot operational diameter;
- Vertigo 400: 80 feet tall, 16-passenger dual seat, with a 62-foot operational diameter;
- Vertigo Park: 130 feet tall, 24-passenger dual seat (12 side-by-side passenger suites) with customizable operational diameter.

A.R.M. has been providing rides to customers worldwide since 1998. Other A.R.M. rides include the Super Shot and the Drop Tower VR, Frenzy, Full Tilt, Mega Bounce, Rock Star, Screamer, Air Hawk, Typhoon and Steam Punk.

Cole is looking forward to getting his Vertigo.

In other news, Cole also purchased a two-story fun house from **Gosetto** during IAAPA Expo 2022.

"Yep, I also bought a New York/New York fun house," Cole said, with a smile.

- **armrides.com**
- **colerides.com**

Park Post-its

AT: Pam Sherborne
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A new law proposed by Belgian officials, will, if passed, ban smoking at all open-air venues frequented by children beginning Jan. 1, 2025.

Smoking already has been banned at restaurants and indoor locations since 2009.

Amusement parks, petting zoos and playgrounds are included on the list of spaces affected by the new proposal, with lawmakers saying other areas, such as hospital entrances and sports venues, could be added.

Lawmakers say the new law will help discourage children from smoking.

•

In the latest effort to revive a rundown venue at **Channel Islands Harbor,** located at Fisherman's Wharf in Oxnard, California, a German company is proposing to build and operate a small amusement park.

The company, which is called **KARLS,** wants to build the park with attractions such as children's rides, shops, cafes and demonstrations of jam and chocolate making.

The theme would be tied to strawberries, the top-selling crop in Ventura County.

Dozens of attractions are shown in a conceptual rendering, which is subject to change, including a floating bed and breakfast establishment, a climbable strawberry, a water slide, coin-operated go-carts and remote-control boats.

KARLS operates seven parks of this type in Germany, but this would be the first one in the United States, he said.

•

The **Hattiesburg Zoo** in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, announced a new recycling program for old or broken cell phones and other electronic devices.

The zoo is working with the company, **EcoCell**, to recycle items like cell phones, iPads, tablets, **Apple** or **Android** watches, GPS devices, e-readers and handheld games.

The goal is to help the environment while bringing in a little extra money for the zoo.

Guests can drop off items in a recycling box at the zoo's gift shop.

•

The performing arts department of the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** in New York City has received a $10 million gift from the American philanthropist **Adrienne Arsht** to benefit its Met Live Art series, an initiative focused on commissioning and presenting contemporary art performances.

The pledge is the largest donation the department has received since the series was founded in 2013.

It complements a $5 million donation Arsht made in 2020, which helped support the department's launch of a paid internship program for graduate and undergraduate students.

The donation will allow the department to continue to embrace resilience as a primary organizing principle, creating opportunities for trail-blazing artists to conceive daring and innovative work.

•

A train station in Tokyo will be transformed into a gateway for a new **Harry Potter** theme park scheduled to open in 2023.

Seibu Railway will renovate **Toshimaen Station** in Nerima ward, the closest station to the new park. It is being constructed on the site of the **Toshimaen** amusement park, which closed in 2020.

The station's platforms will be redesigned to reflect the aesthetic of the Harry Potter film franchise.

•

The historic **Old Tucson** in Tucson, Arizona, which was shut down due to COVID-19 in 2020, reopened last October.

In April 2022, **American Heritage Railways** won the bid to take over the studio and immediately began planning events that would bring people to the southern Arizona landmark.

Those events included a revival of the Halloween event Nightfall, a Christmas event called Yuletide and Old Town Day.

•

A group behind the movement to save the historic Skyride at **Expo Square**, Tulsa, Oklahoma, recently announced plans to find a new operator for the ride is not fair to those potential operators.

A recent report from a local news agency, *FOX23*, reported that Expo Square was opening a 45-day period for a new operator to step forward to run the historic Skyride.

The request, posted to Expo Square's website on November 22, calls for any qualified operators to propose a plan to either maintain and operate the ride or outright purchase, maintain and operate the ride by Jan. 13, 2023.

It came with some caveats. It restricts sponsorships and advertising on the ride.

If someone were to purchase the ride, it asks they share 25% of gross sales to the **Tulsa County Public Facilities Authority (TCPFA),** the public body overseeing Expo Square. The TCPFA consists of the three elected Tulsa County commissioners and two other people they appoint.

If someone were to agree to operate and maintain the ride, but not buy it, that number goes up to 45% of gross sales that must be shared with the TCPFA.

Funland of Fredericksburg adds two rides, plans include restaurant

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Clint Novak of Funland of Fredericksburg and Len Soled of Rides 4 U were all smiles at IAAPA Expo 2022 (above left). Patriot Plunge delighted riders at the IAAPA Expo (above right). AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

FREDERICKSBURG, Va. — Screams at the IAAPA Expo are transferring to Virginia. One of the rides eliciting shrieks was music to **Funland of Fredericksburg**'s ears.

"This [Expo] was actually special for us because we actually had a ride that was ours on display," said **Clint Novak**, general manager. "They closed the show on Friday, and it was here on Monday. It was delivered very quickly."

Owing to weather issues, the pad for the drop tower was poured in early December.

"As an enthusiast, I never understood why weather delayed things so much," Novak told *Amusement Today*. "When it comes to pouring cement, there is a one-to-two-week waiting list, and when it rains, you don't get it the next day; you get bumped to the bottom of the list."

The ride was erected in late December. It is named Patriot Plunge. Adorned in red, white and blue, it seats 10.

A second ride, The Flip Side, was built first. Already installed, it is a Mini-Dance Party. Both rides are from **SBF-Visa**. **Rides 4 U** represents SBF-Visa in North America and brokered the sale.

The park is willing to do previews on days in the winter weather permitting (40 degrees or more), however, the grand opening is planned for early March.

"We were the first park in Virginia to go year-round, so to speak," Novak said. "We try to keep rides open as much as possible. Rides that do need winter maintenance go down one at a time for a couple of weeks."

Novak feels the drop tower will provide visibility from the road (at 40 feet) but feels families can still ride it together.

"We wanted a variety of both thrill and fun," he said. "The Flip Side will be the most thrilling ride we've had here. I had an opportunity to ride it at **Fun Spot** [in November] and it's a great ride."

Novak likes that the attraction comes with three ride cycles: a milder one that doesn't go upside down, a medium level and a more intense extreme level. The park intends to operate it at the medium level unless a group has a special request. That middle level still swings riders upside down.

Funland has a sister property in Fairfax, which features a more upscale restaurant, Tailgater's Grill. The goal is to duplicate the successful formula at the Fredericksburg location, but that upgrade still has months to go.

"When the park was built, it had a '90s-style snack bar," said Novak. "The new location has had a full-scale restaurant and bar for a couple of years now, and we've come to understand the power of having a really good menu. We are trying to bring that to the Fredericksburg location."

To accommodate this expansion, the park has already created an outdoor

▸ **See FUNLAND, page 18**

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The FEC has begun taking steps to upgrade its food options.
COURTESY FUNLAND OF FREDERICKSBURG

FUNLAND

Continued from page 18

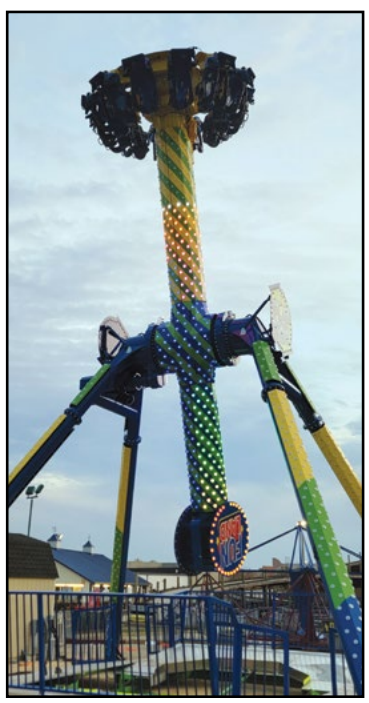
patio area and installed three garage doors to facilitate the environment. A pergola and AstroTurf make the outdoor setting more inviting.

"We have a tent there for events. It gives us an area where people can mingle," Novak noted.

Enhancements indoors will complete the immersive transformation. Funland is in the process of positioning televisions. Novak said the biggest part of the project is a remodel of the kitchen to enable the higher quality food currently served at the Fairfax location.

As that process is underway, the FEC has upgraded the menu to include cheeseburgers, cheesesteak sandwiches and wings.

If everything falls into place as expected, the changes may be complete by the end of 2023 or going into 2024. A full-service bar is now available. Until the full experience is in place, the current café is called Tailgater's Express.



The Flip Side, an SBF-Visa Mini Dance Party 360, is Funland's most thrilling ride.
COURTESY FUNLAND OF FREDERICKSBURG

A mezzanine upstairs has had televisions installed as a type of "sky porch,' for game watching and lounge area.

The Fredericksburg location has been in operation for close to a quarter of a century. In that time span, it has seen considerable growth. In recent years, there has been a rush of additions.

"We are always adding a crazy amount of stuff," Novak said.

In 2018, the FEC put in an indoor SBF-Visa spinning coaster and Clip and Climb.

The following year saw a huge addition with a multi-level go-kart track and a redo of the facility's batting cages to make them brand new. In December of that year, a **Triotech** XD dark ride carried them into 2020, as did an enlargement of the arcade.

Although the pandemic slowed things down, Funland did do some enhancements while closed. Improvements included a new look with new greens on the miniature golf course and paint on some of the rides.

The next big addition came in January 2022 with an **RCI** Ropes Course over the arcade.

The two new rides and restaurant enhancements for 2023 continue to create momentum for the park. For an FEC, this sustained investment is nothing short of impressive.

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

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Urban Air Adventure Park is expanding its presence in Florida and Utah with a new franchise agreement that will bring a total of three new parks of the FEC chain to Salt Lake City and Tampa Bay.

The agreement is a partnership between **Thomas Garcia**, an existing Urban Air franchisee who operates two successful parks in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Littleton, Colorado, and **Greg Dunn**, who has worked in the asset management industry for 25 years and was looking for a fresh investment as the next phase of his career. Dunn has known Garcia for years and was aware of the experience he's had building Urban Air parks, including the popularity in local communities and the success financially.

"Urban Air is innovative in how they developed and cultivated their attractions to make it different than the competitors. It's a unique experience for customers and this business is not a fad. I like that it's affordable for families and a repeatable experience that a kid is going to want to go back and do over again," said Dunn. "This is a business I can feel good about owning."

•

A Lanarkshire, United Kingdom, trampoline center epanded with the addition of a Laser Quest section. **Flip Out Glasgow**, based in Rutherglen, underwent a mini-refurbishment as part of the plan, and debuted the new section on December 17, 2023.

FEC owners hope the experience will feel like stepping into a video game. "The team at Flip Out Glasgow [was] thrilled to be able to unveil plans for the refurbishment which will ensure that our indoor activity experience in Glasgow will be ever bigger and better and will be open in time for the Christmas holidays," stated **Richard Beese**, the co-owner of Flip Out.

•

A new family entertainment center with a movie theater is coming to Enid, Oklahoma. The Enid City Commission approved an economic development deal to build a 54,000 square-foot entertainment facility.

The entertainment side will feature 11 lanes of duck pin bowling, virtual reality, and nearly 100 state-of-the-art arcade games linked to game cards.

The new theater area will feature nine movie screens, one of which will be an **IMAX** size iconic mega screen with 3D sound and all electric recliner chairs. All other rooms will be equipped with the state-of-the-art projection systems, audio, and reserved electric recliner chairs.

"There has been a need for a theater for a long time. We found the right deal for a price we could afford to benefit not only all residents, but enhance quality of life for employees of companies that wish to relocate here," said Mayor **George Pankonin**.

•

Electric Shuffle, a technology-driven shuffleboard concept, opened its second U.S. location near the Rainey Street entertainment district in Austin, Texas. The 6,790-square-foot, location-based entertainment venue opened its doors to the public on November 4, 2022.

The Electric Shuffle experience includes high-tech shuffleboard, unique interior design, live DJs, craft cocktails and a variety of shareable food options. The innovative concept puts a contemporary spin on the game of shuffleboard and has been reimagined using custom-built tables and interactive technology. The Austin space has a total of 10 shuffleboard tables available and each table can accommodate up 20 players. The tables keep score themselves and take photos of the group participating.

"We are thrilled to finally be opening our doors and can't wait to show Austin what we've been working on," shared **Gene Ball**, CEO of Electric Shuffle USA. "We love bringing groups of friends and are excited to join the epic community in downtown Austin."

The space and the game itself are designed with social media in mind. The Electric Shuffle design team devised a setting that blends science and art together by utilizing camera vision technology that tracks every puck, keeps score and integrates players into a variety of team-based shuffleboard games.

•

In a region crowded with trampoline and bounce-house attractions, **Slick City St. Louis West** aims to stand out with its hair-raising slides.

The Missouri FEC is described as a water park sans water. Riders climb towers and then propel down slides of varying heights on mats using what Marketing Manager **Logan Secrist** describes as "patented dry slide technology." The material in the mats allows riders to glide over the bumps and twists in the slides.

The 39,000-square-foot facility, which opened in late November, offers 10 slides, three "air" courts (similar to basketball courts, but the floor is filled with air), a zip line, a trapeze and a swing.

"It's kind of like an adrenaline rush," said **Anna Biby**, Slick City's manager of park support. She describes the ride as similar to being on a roller coaster.

The owners, who are originally from St. Louis, operate several family entertainment attractions, including a Slick City in Denver. The current capacity of Slick City West is 200, it could expand to 275.

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Indianapolis proves good site for the 140th IAFE convention

AT: *B. Derek Shaw*
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Organizers of the **International Association of Fairs and Expositions** (IAFE) convention and trade show felt holding the event in the "Crossroads of America" was a good move. This allowed many fairs within driving distance the opportunity to attend the convention.

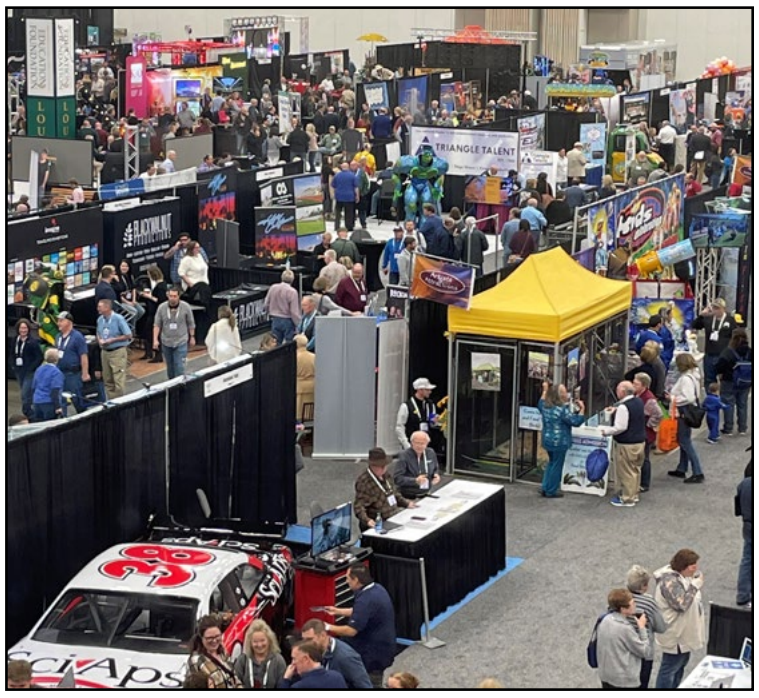
"About 2,500 people attended the 2022 IAFE Convention & Trade Show, with delegates coming from 48 states, Canada and Australia. The turnout was just shy of that of the 2019 convention. More importantly, the revenue goals set for the event were exceeded," said IAFE President and CEO **Marla Calico**. "The 'Fair-A-Palooza' event at the **Indiana State Fair** produced by the fair staff and **North American Midway Entertainment** (NAME) was a huge success and will be talked about for years to come."

This first-time experience was held the same evening as the annual IAFE Education Foundation event, both on the fairgrounds. Over 1,100 people were shuttled to indoor facilities there, which offered ice skating, a few rides and games, DJ entertainment, a selfie photo booth and of course fair food and drinks.

Well over half of the trade show was entertainment or entertainment-related companies. There also was an increased amount of technology services represented. Many vendors felt there was good buyer turnout. COURTESY IAFE

There were 315 spaces sold for the two-day trade show, with 220 firms represented. Carnivals that had a booth on the floor included **Kissel Entertainment**, **Powers Great American Midways**, **Reithoffer Shows, Inc.**, and **Talley Amusements, Inc**. Many carnival owners walked the show floor as well as multiple staff from numerous fair operations. Also, 17 different acts performed on showcasing stages inside the room. There also was an opportunity for exhibitors to participate in a buyers/exhibitors networking breakfast.

"The 2022 IAFE Trade Show



all aspects of the fair business to unite. Exhibitors reported great attendance to show management over the course of the two-day event. Trade Show booth sales were up 9% over 2021," IAFE Director of Sales **Steve Siever** said. "We've seen an uptick in technology services. We've got some drone folks in there, a lot of ticketing technology, cashless solutions, that sort of thing, has picked up. Entertainment is a huge part of our show. Roughly 65% of our show is entertainment-related, whether that be acts, attractions or agencies representing acts. It's an exciting environment." Many vendors felt there was good buyer turnout.

Mary Ann Lienhart Cross, **Elkhart County 4-H Fair**, Goshen, Indiana, was on the trade show floor with a specific need. "I'm in charge of our Hometown Heroes Day (fireman, health care workers and veterans). I'm trying to find entertainment for the late afternoon and evening."

"I'm looking for a Saturday night event. I'm also looking for a Wednesday night 4-H or youth dance [entertainment] for our fair," explained **Liz Edwards**, **Campbell County Fair**, Gillette, Wyoming.

Ashley Warner, **Calgary Exhibition and Stampede**, had numerous items on her list. "It's really a mix of things. My role is more focused on the food and commercial retail, but we do have our entertainment [component.] We're looking to book a few acts and really just see what's out there."

"We're out here looking for a variety of different things," said **Bryan Blair, York State Fair**. "I'm looking to book grounds acts two and three years out, '24, '25 and '26, trying to make some contacts and connections." The Pennsylvania fair recently received a capital redevelopment grant from the state. "We're going to take a huge chunk of that and renovate the classic 1926 grandstand. We're talking to bleacher and seating companies about do we keep the regular seat style or do we go to benches with the backs, trying to upgrade that facility."

Workshops were on course with current topics and trends. Sessions included Countdown to Transition — Succession Planning for Fairs, New and Unique Sponsor Ideas, Growing Revenue Online, Uniting the Community Through Food & Culture and Key Factors for Crowd Management.

"The education is always fresh because the content changes from year to year," said Calico.

▸ **See IAFE, page 23**

IAFE members receive awards

In addition to the numerous seminars, workshops, exhibitor trade show, entertainment, IAFE Zone meetings, fair competition awards, there are also presentations made to deserving fair staff each year at the convention.

The annual Hall of Fame Award is presented to an individual for distinguished achievement in exposition management. **Renae Korslein**, manager, **North Dakota State Fair**, Minot, was the recipient this year.

Korslein

Heritage Awards were presented to five individuals in the field of volunteer fair management. They include **Gary Van Aernam, Iowa State Fair**, Des Moines; **Ella Marie Hills, Washburn County Fair**, Spooner, Wisconsin; **Kent Hyde, Ozark Empire Fair**, Springfield, Missouri.; **Gary McConnell**, Iowa State Fair, Des Moines; and **Heidi Steffen, Linn County Fair**, Central City, Iowa.

Cashman

The Rising Star Award was presented to **Cody Cashman, Red River Valley Fair Association** in West Fargo, North Dakota. The award was created by the IAFE Young Professionals Initiative (YPI) to recognize leadership and industry contributions of IAFE members, age 40 and younger.

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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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Kim Helmbold, who has worked at the **Mother Lode Fairgrounds** (also known as the 29th District Agricultural Association) Sonora, California, the past 24 years was recently named permanent fair manager. Helmbold began working at the fairgrounds in 1998 as a temporary employee in the administration office taking and processing entry forms during the months leading up to the annual fair. Later, she became the fairgrounds' livestock clerk before being promoted to livestock superintendent in 2017.

"I'm very excited to be a part of the future of the fairgrounds," said Helmbold in a news release.

"The board felt that she came with years of dedicated experience to our community, she knows the people, the town, the events that happen at our fairgrounds and she believes in making the fairgrounds a central part of the City of Sonora," said **Ron Hamilton**, president of the fairgrounds' board, to the **Union Democrat.**

The next fair comes around June 29 – July 2, with **Paul Maurer Shows**, presenting the rides.

•

New York state officials recently met with local representatives to promote and strengthen county fairs across the Empire state. The state **Department of Agriculture and Markets** announced that stakeholders will meet twice annually, in the spring and fall, with the initial dates to be chosen at the annual meeting of the **New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs** this month.

Representatives from the association and additional stakeholders participated in the discussions. This generated ideas to further the growth of all 50 county and youth fairs statewide as part of a plan to evaluate ways to increase marketing and promotion, along with opportunities to improve youth and agricultural programming initiatives.

In 2021, **Kathy Hochul**, governor, directed a review to assess support, growth, and revitalization opportunities for all fairs in the state. As part of this initiative, the state created a new position, Agricultural Fair Development Director, seen as step forward in streamlining the state's work with county fairs and facilitating increased opportunities for funding and growth.

•

Hope Lunsford was recently named the new Operations Manager of the **Pensacola Interstate Fair**. Previously she was the part-time office manager for over 30 years. Lunsford took over for **Don Frenkel**, who recently retired. Three different members of the Lunsford family have managed the fair since its creation in 1935. (**John Sr., John Jr.** and most recently Don.)

The 10-day fair takes place on the 170-acre site in late October each year with **Reithoffer Shows**, the ride provider.

•

At the helm of **The Merced**, California, **County Fair** is **Richard Sandoval**. He was named the new deputy manager in mid-December. Sandoval has an extensive history in the fair industry and the Merced community. He first started in the industry in 2002, when he joined the Merced County Fair, managing fair-time operations and admissions personnel. In 2010, he joined the **Madera District Fair** (California), overseeing its fair-time operations before being named its deputy manager in 2015.

"We are thrilled to welcome Richard Sandoval back to our Merced County Fair team, this time as our new Deputy Manager," **Teresa Burrola**, CEO of the Merced County Fair, told **The Merced County Times**. "Richard is an exceptional leader who has a passion for our fair and our community. I look forward to working with him again to help lead our fair into the future."

"The Merced County Fair is a staple for the community. It brings people together and creates memories – whether that's participating in the fair as an exhibitor or attending with friends and family. That extends to events throughout the year. The fairgrounds are a true gathering spot for the community. I look forward to working with the incredible team here at the Merced County Fair, led by Teresa Burrola, to continue to improve the fair for our community and our future generations of fairgoers," Sandoval told the paper.

The Merced County Fair returns June 7 – 11. **Butler Amusements** has the spot.

•

For four days later this month, January 15-18, the 100th Convention & Trade Show of the **Western Fairs Association** takes place in Reno, Nevada. The convention includes a trade show, bowling tournament, chair's reception, dinner and centennial celebration, educational sessions and more.

Debuting is a vision focus group for WFA members to share what they hope to see from the association in the next 100 years.

Founded in 1922, Western Fairs Association is a nonprofit trade association serving the fair industry throughout the western United States and Canada. The primary purpose is to assist in maintaining the highest professional standards within the fair industry through a voluntary network of individuals and organizations. The primary objective of the WFA is to promote the prosperity of fairs through educational activities, training programs and legislative advocacy. Currently there are more than 800 members, representing fair-related businesses, fair management, fair board directors, festivals and industry associations.

IAFE

Continued from page 21

In addition, there were 19 networking circle topics for attendees to attend on Sunday and Tuesday. Each registered attendee was assigned to a "circle" that was made up of people with similar job duties, providing the opportunity to meet new people to expand their network for the future.

During the convention **Jennifer Giesike**, president/CEO of the **Washington Area Chamber of Commerce** and the manager of the **Washington Town and Country Fair**, Washington, Missouri, was named the 2023 chair of the IAFE.

The **Showman's League of America** (SLA) was also in Indianapolis. There was no tabletop trade show; however, the league hosted its annual memorial service that paid respect to those who have passed in the industry throughout the year. The new officers for 2023 are President, **Marc Janus**, (**B. Original Foods**, who books with **Powers Great American Midways**); 1st Vice President **Nate Janousek**, (**Fun Biz Concessions**); 2nd Vice President, **Lorelei Schoendienst** (**Luehrs' Ideal Rides**) and 3rd Vice President, **Blake Huston** (NAME). The SLA Hall of Honor inductees were **Barry Jamieson** and **Dick Janas**, posthumously.

Rounding out SLA activities was the annual President's Banquet at the **Indiana Roof Ballroom**. With the theme of "Bubbles and Bow Ties," the night honored outgoing SLA President, **Patrick Jamieson**, (**World's Finest Shows**, Ontario, Canada).

The **Outdoor Amusement Business Association** (OABA) also had a presence with a booth across from the IAFE registration area in the main lobby. "The OABA made three presentations at the convention," said **Greg Chiecko**, president and CEO. "Each focused around a positive and open communication between the fairs and carnivals. We must educate the fairs and their boards on the changes taking place in our industry. It is becoming more difficult for carnivals to realize profits in today's environment. There are carnivals who have exited the arena and we don't see anyone entering the business. Fairs and carnivals must work together in order to preserve this long-honored tradition."

Calico summed up the 2022 convention. "We got a lot of new people and people from fairs who had never attended our convention, solely because now it was within driving distance and it was affordable for them to come. When you have the wealth of county fairs within a 500-mile radius of the crossroads of the United States, you know you're going to have a success. That was a huge success for us."

The 2023 IAFE convention and trade show takes place at the **Salt Palace Convention Center**, Salt Lake City, Utah, November 26-29, 2023.

- **fairsandexpos.com**
- **showmensleague.org**
- **oaba.org**

The Circle City Sidewalk Stompers Clown Band from Franklin, Indiana, was one of the showcase acts entertaining attendees. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

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Belmont Magic continues to dazzle crowds at nationwide events

UNITED STATES — When he was child, **Al Belmont** saw a magic performance by **Harry Blackstone**. That's all it took as he has been hooked ever since. Started in 1985, Belmont Magic continues to amaze and entertain crowds at fairs, festivals, amusement parks, theaters, schools, corporate functions and other venues. Al and his wife **Suzanne**, who has been his assistant since they were 16, provide top notch magic entertainment up and down the eastern half of the country. They perform upwards of 300 shows per year, with as many as 40 or more shows at each fair.

Belmont's fast-paced act on his own self-contained ShowMaster mobile stage (**Century Industries**) offers TV-style illusions and smaller magic effects, along with his own original magic creations, all while engaging audience participation. Add to that great costuming and spectacular lighting and sound. While not a children's show, Belmont Magic appeals to all as a family-friendly, fun and light-hearted magic experience. Belmont's flashy opening moves rapidly with 11 tricks in three and a half minutes. Shows range in length from 25 minutes up to a full hour.

This year **Belmont Magic** will present a new and more mystifying version of "Sawing Through or Dividing a Lady" with no big boxes or concealment of any sort, while using an audience volunteer. This is one of just four such illusions being presented in the world. After guests leave the presentation, they will spend days asking, "How did they do that?" This year is the 102nd anniversary of the original sawing a lady in half illusion. "I like making people happy, seeing their smiles. Magic has been my love since I was ten," said Belmont.

Belmont Magic fair shows include **Greater Gulf State Fair**, **State Fair Meadowlands** and the **Florida Strawberry Festival**. Amusement park shows include **Six Flags Great Adventure**, **Six Flags Over Georgia** and **Hersheypark**.

—B. Derek Shaw

PHOTOS COURTESY BELMONT MAGIC

This new program provides OABA standards that help improve our entire industry. That is something we can all be proud to support.
Industry veteran and OABA Chair
Andy Deggeller
President of Deggeller Attractions
Any operator that meets the OABA requirements for Circle of Excellence designation poses less of a risk for loss and gives us more confidence in providing coverage at a reduced rate.
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Incorporating the Circle of Excellence designation as part of the fair's selecting and contracting of carnival operators should be a priority.
Marla Calico
IAFE
We have long discounted our legal fees for Circle of Excellence members, and we look forward to validating this improved program.
R. Wayne Pierce
Pierce Adventure Law

WATER PARKS & RECREATION

Bavarian Inn plans expansion — page 26 / News Splash — page 26

Royal Caribbean Group building largest cruise ship, water park

AT: *Jeffrey Seifert*
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

MIAMI, Fla. — When the highly anticipated Icon of the Seas debuts in late 2023 it will be a ship with many superlatives — including the largest water park at sea. **Royal Caribbean Group** confirmed that Icon will also be the largest ship ever built and the first of the new Icon class, surpassing in size the four ships of the Oasis class which are currently the largest passenger ships on the planet. A new class means a new design and a fresh start compared to the ships that preceded it.

Spanning three decks with additional height added by a slide tower, Thrill Island will contain the largest water park at sea. COURTESY ROYAL CARIBBEAN GROUP

"With each new ship, we raise the bar in the travel industry while enhancing what our guests know and love," said **Jason Liberty**, president and CEO, Royal Caribbean Group. "From the moment they step on board, every experience is specifically designed to give them the best vacation anywhere on land and at sea. With Icon of the Seas, we've taken this to a new level and made the ultimate family vacation."

To cut down on greenhouse gas emissions Icon will make use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) — the cleanest burning marine fuel — to power its engines. The latest hydrogen-based fuel cell systems will be utilized to produce electricity and fresh water.

Royal Caribbean introduced the concept of neighborhoods, each with its own themed area, with the Oasis class and that concept will continue. Eight neighborhoods on the Icon will help break up the layout of the ship. The largest, and likely most popular, will be Thrill Island, a three-deck experience that is home to Category 6, the record-breaking water park.

Among the attractions will be six high-profile slides: Pressure Drop, with a 66-degree incline, will be the industry's first open free-fall slide; Frightening Bolt, which starts from a tower high above the top deck, will start with a floor-drop capsule and, once in operation, will become the tallest drop slide at sea. Two family raft rides, Storm Surge and Hurricane Hunter, are also firsts for a cruise ship in that they both use family-style, four-passenger rafts. One of the two will feature a transparent lotus leaf wall suspended over the edge of the ship. Two mat sides will start from the same high tower shared by Frightening Bolt and, like one of the raft slides, will have translucent sections that extend over the side of the ship. In keeping with Royal Caribbean tradition, a FlowRider surf simulator will also be included on Thrill Island.

Those seeking calming waters will have plenty of options to choose from as one of the ships mantras is "water, water, everywhere." Scattered throughout the neighborhoods are multiple pools including the largest pool at sea. The Royal Bay pool, located in the Chill Island neighborhood, will not only have plenty of water — more than 40,000 gallons — but also in-water lounge seating and elevated whirlpools. Chill Island's Cloud 17 pool is a serene, adults-only retreat, and the infinity edge Cove Pool bows out over the edge of the ship and will offer stunning views of the ocean. The fourth pool in the Chill Island neighborhood is Swim & Tonic which features multiple partially submerged lounge chairs along with in-pool group seating and a swim-up bar — a first for Royal Caribbean.

The Hideaway Pool aft on Deck 15, is suspended eight decks above the Surfside neighborhood and will offer infinity views more than 65 feet above the deck. It will have a beach club vibe with a resident DJ. Children will have their own pool in the Surfside neighborhood. Located in the aft section, this water-play area features plenty of interactive water toys, smaller slides, climbing structures and yet another infinity pool looking straight off the back of the ship. All the pools are purposely places at the edge of the ship with seats facing the ocean. Guest feedback indicated that not only do those on board want to be in the water, they want to see the ocean, and on Icon they can do both at the same time.

Icon of the Seas will port out of Miami and cruise the Easter and Western Caribbean starting in 2024. All itineraries include stops at Royal Caribbean's private island, Perfect Day at CocoCay. Another record was broken when public bookings opened on October 25, 2022. It was the largest single-day booking the cruise line had seen in its 53-year history.

Young adults and kids have their own water play area at Surfside which includes an infinity pool at the rear of the ship (above left). The Hideaway is suspended between decks, 135 feet above the ocean (above right). COURTESY ROYAL CARIBBEAN GROUP

Michigan's Bavarian Inn plans major expansion

AT: *Jeffrey Seifert*
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FRANKENMUTH, Mich. — Groundbreaking took place in December of last year on a major indoor water park and family entertainent center expansion for the **Bavarian Inn Lodge**. The new $80-million expansion will add more than 100,000 square feet to its indoor water park and FEC. When completed, the 140,000-square-foot facility will be the largest in the state.

"We are truly raising the bar on fun at the lodge, creating unique attractions and new types of experiences within our resort," said **Michael Keller Zehnder**, president of the Bavarian Inn Lodge. "This expansion will help us to advance our goal of creating fun and enjoyable experiences for all ages. We are reimagining family fun and see this as an exciting project for all of Frankenmuth."

Specific details of the expansion have yet to be announced, but the new area promises 20 new attractions, including a large indoor wave pool, an adult-only swim-up bar, and a series of body and tube waterslides. The general contractor for the expansion is **R.C. Hendrick & Son, Inc.**, the same company that built all previous six phases of the lodge.

"Our family business is proud to be a longtime partner to another Michigan family business, the Frankenmuth Bavarian Inn, and we look forward to making their vision become a reality," said **Chip Hendrick** of R.C. Hendrick & Son, Inc.

The lodge plans to keep all of the existing spaces operating while the new addition is being built. The existing four pools, three whirlpools, and two waterslides, along with the family fun center with its indoor golf course, children's play village and games arcade will remain open to guests staying at the lodge. As areas become completed, they will open to the public, with some new family fun center attractions expected to open in 2023. The current plan is to have the entire expansion ready for guests by spring 2024.

"We're excited to announce more on the unique attractions that we're adding as the construction process is underway," Zehnder said

Frankenmuth, also known as Michigan's Little Bavaria, is a German-themed city that has been a popular Midwest tourist destination for decades. The city attracts millions of visitors who come to experience the European charm, food, hospitality and other fun activities that are the hallmark of one of Michigan's top tourist attraction cities

The city is home to **Bonner's Christmas Wonderland**, which is known for its highway billboards in neighboring states — some more than 300 miles away — proclaiming it to be the largest Christmas store in the world. The Bavarian Inn was founded in 1986 and has undergone six major developments. It is one of the state's largest indoor water park hotels with 360 rooms, gift shops, lounges, restaurants, a banquet facility, a conference center and meeting rooms. The adjacent **Bavarian Inn Restaurant**, best known for its Frankenmuth chicken dinners, is one of the top independent restaurants in the United States with seating for 1,200 guests. The Inn served more than 20 million meals in its first 100 years (1888 through 1988). Currently, it serves more than 900,000 meals each year.

NEWSSPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
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A new health and wellness center recently debuted in Cherry Hill, Maryland. The Baltimore Department of Recreation and Parks opened the **Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center** on November 9. The $23 million project features an indoor aquatic center with three pools, including a lap pool; kiddie pool and recreation pool with a rock climbing wall, small waterslide and waterplay features. The center also features a community room, fitness studios, a gymnasium with a basketball court, an indoor walking track and outdoor basketball courts. Work continues on the surrounding park which will eventually include three lighted grass fields, a playground, walking trails, a fishing pier, a dog park and a field house. These amenities will add to the existing outdoor pool and synthetic turf field that was completed earlier last year.

Funding for the center included city and state bonds, Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Program Open Space, a surtax on Horseshoe Casino's table games for city recreation programs, and Casino Local Impact Fund Grants overseen by the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership and by the city through the Casino Local Development Council.

•

The city of Santa Barbara, California, has moved closer to making a $14 million makeover for **Ortega Park** a reality. According to **Justin Van Mullem**, the project manager, the plans are almost "shovel ready" and include an expanded aquatic area with a new swimming pool that is nearly seven times larger than the existing pool. Six, 25-yard lanes with starting blocks will allow the facility to host competitive swim meets. The pool can also accommodate water aerobics, recreational lap swimming, competitive activities for local clubs and swimming lessons. Other water features include a waterslide, wading pool and splash pad.

Plans for the park also include an all wheels park for bikes, scooters and roller blades; a multi-sport, artificial turf field with lighting for evening activities; and a community plaza with bocce ball courts, **Ping-Pong** tables, bean bag toss, and open grass fields for community events and festivals.

City staff are projecting that construction documents will be finalized before June 2023, and after a contract is awarded, construction could break ground in May 2024.

•

The **Kentucky Splash Waterpark & Campground** in Williamsburg, Kentucky, is on track to open a new Caribbean-themed attraction. The waterplay structure will features five waterslides, two water buckets and numerous interactive water features. The new attraction is expected to be ready when the park opens for the 2023 season.

A water park, campground and family entertainment center comprise the city-owned facility. It was the vision of then Mayor **Bill Nighbert** and Tourism Director **Alvin Sharpe** who decided in the late 1990s to build a new center rather than renovate the city's existing rundown pool. Future expansion plans include pickleball courts, tennis courts, a walking trail, additional campsites and cottages.

•

Water Country water park in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, is transforming two of its existing waterslides into all new attractions. The two tube slides — Black Hole and Warp Eight — will be upgraded with a light and sound experience from **iSlide**, a Dutch waterslide special effects company that uses state-of-the-art technology to enhance aquatic rides. iSlide products are distributed in North America by **Aquatics by Westwind Inc**. of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

"Water Country will be the home of New England's only next-gen water slides featuring bold lighting and thunderous sound to make for more thrilling attractions than ever before," **Matt Hehl**, general manager of Water Country, said in a statement. "We're really excited to ramp the ride experience up to eleven with sights and sounds that surprise the senses, the centerpiece of what will be the best season in Water Country's history."

The park will be celebrating its 40th season when it opens on May 27.

•

The former **Coyote Ranch Resort** in Wichita Falls, Texas, is transforming into a **Jellystone Park**. Along with the name change the resort is expanding with new attractions and activities. The renovations will be done in two phases, with the first scheduled to be completed by Memorial Day.

Phase one includes 50 additional recreational-vehicle sites, a massive new splash pad, amphitheater, renovation to the chapel and grand lodge, new restrooms, security check and basketball courts. Also included are new appliances and amenities for many of the cabins.

Phase two include 50 RV sites and additional camping spots near the fishing pond, a housekeeping facility and a new bathhouse.

BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

Industry remember Alberto Zamperla — pages 31 / MarketWatch — page 32

Embed working to bring innovation, new technology to FECs

AT: *John W.C. Robinson*
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DALLAS, Texas — Cashless solutions provider **Embed** launched the new technology insights data visualization dashboard, STATS, at IAAPA Expo 2022 in Orlando.

Developed with and powered by **Amazon Web Services** (AWS), STATS is a powerful data and report visualization tool designed to help family entertainment centers worldwide transform guest experiences, improve operational efficiency and boost revenue using data.

"We were ecstatic to see the amazing reception of both prospects and customers towards STATS when we launched it at IAAPA," says **Renee Welsh**, CEO at Embed. "STATS was the demo-in-demand at our booth and the show — with the help of the brilliant representatives from Amazon Web Services, we illuminated show attendees with the benefits of cloud-based solutions such as STATS and the virtues of other Software as a Service (SaaS) products we offer."

Embed has made its name in the amusement industry by continually innovating and expanding what technology can deliver and provide to FEC operators. But using technology to improve an industry is nothing new to Welsh.

Renee Welsh

Early in her career, she began the startup company **Booking Boss**, a cloud-based reservation software designed specifically for attractions, tour operators and activity providers. It was capable of managing ticketing and bookings centrally and could reduce queues and streamline processes.

"The startup culture, at its core, is about innovating and creating something new for a particular market segment. That's what we did with Booking Boss," explained Welsh. "As CEO, we've really brought that culture into Embed."

In a commitment to technology innovation, Embed has been launching industry firsts year-after-year to enable, empower and ease the business of fun. For example, its Mobile Wallet virtual game card launched in 2019 remains the only non-banking, non-finance and non-loyalty brand to sit in customers' Apple Wallet or Google Pay.

Cashless solutions provider Embed showcased many of its innovations to allow for facilities to transition to cashless operation as well as learn more about its customers, including the ground-breaking STATS system, during IAAPA Expo 2022. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

When it was first unveiled, the Mobile Wallet started to truly seperate Embed from the redemption card pack.

"We are on a continuous pursuit to develop tech solutions that will propel businesses to become the FECs of the future. At its core, the Mobile Wallet was inspired by the guest and in the desire to improve their experience," explaned Welsh. "When you look at the guest's journey inside an FEC, we just wanted to make it as seamless and interactive as possible. We were fortunate to be able to partner with **Google** and **Apple**, look at some of their latest tech and then look at how we could apply it to our industry."

As opposed to traditional redemption cards, the Mobile Wallet connects an FEC directly to the consumer via their mobile phone.

"It gives the FEC operator the abilty to really capture their customer [gameplay] data, to be able to learn more about their customers actions within their facility to build loyalty amid their existing customers. The Mobile Wallet has a much broader benefit to the FEC industry in its ability to interact with the customer-base."

With the recent pandemic acting as a catalyst in driving the popularity of contactless payment methods, there are now more than 1,000 locations utilizing Embed's Mobile Wallet currently, and more than 50,000 customer registrations per month on the platform. The popularity and success of Mobile Wallet is undeniable. "We've got about 20,000,000 transactions that go through that platform now each month," added Welsh.

With Mobile Wallet proving what's possible, in 2022 Embed introduced its Tech of Transformation — a new line of innovative, integrated hardware and software solutions developed with technology industry leaders to transform the FEC industry.

"Embed's a 21-year-old business this year, but we've really transformed the business inside out and looked at how we can create a culture of innovation."

That has influenced how Embed looks at the amusement industry and how it looks at the guest experience and the customer journey.

"We do not want technology for technology's sake. We use that fresh perspective from the startup culture then apply technology that already exists in other industry sectors to the family entertainment industry in a meaningful, profitable and sustainable way."

The key innovation in Embed's recent unveilings is STATS, which makes business insights work harder for operators, providing data from venues, including a range of revenue data and a revenue forecasting widget. It helps operators identify more successful games and forecast revenue to future-proof their business. SaaS solution is a response to ever-growing challenges that traditional FEC operators face as the industry digitizes. With STATS, operators of all business sizes can best manage their business, improve staffing levels and scheduling and reduce manpower waste.

FECs have evolved from decades of operating with quarters and tokens to utilizing redemption cards and, now, the rapid changing benefits of Mobile Wallet. And that continued

As opposed to traditional redemption cards, the Mobile Wallet connects an FEC directly to the consumer via their mobile phone. COURTESY EMBED

See EMBED, page 28

EMBED

Continued from page 27

evolution, with the guest in mind, is key for FEC growth and survival.

"At the very core of everything is the guest. If you're not innovating and you're not listening to your guest, then you stagnate and you die," said Welsh. "I think two of the things that are incredible about this industry is its resiliance and its innovation. But, in the end, putting the guest at the center of everything you do is really important.

"The beauty of Embed's technology is that it enables you to use our broad and deep feature set to be able to adapt and transition and take advantage of things such as dynamic pricing. Our new STATS product enables you to get realtime data visualization and look at performance from a game activity perspective, a manpower perspective and other options — and it's all right there at the operator's fingertips in realtime."

The STATS insights platform leverages AWS to build user-friendly, customizable dashboards that visually present data, such as arcade game performance, guest activity and revenue forecasting to make understanding the deep insights of an operation easy and engaging. This also helps FECs better understand guests' behavior and improve the guest experience. Built with AWS's global cloud infrastructure, this cloud-based solution offers accessibility, security and low latency.

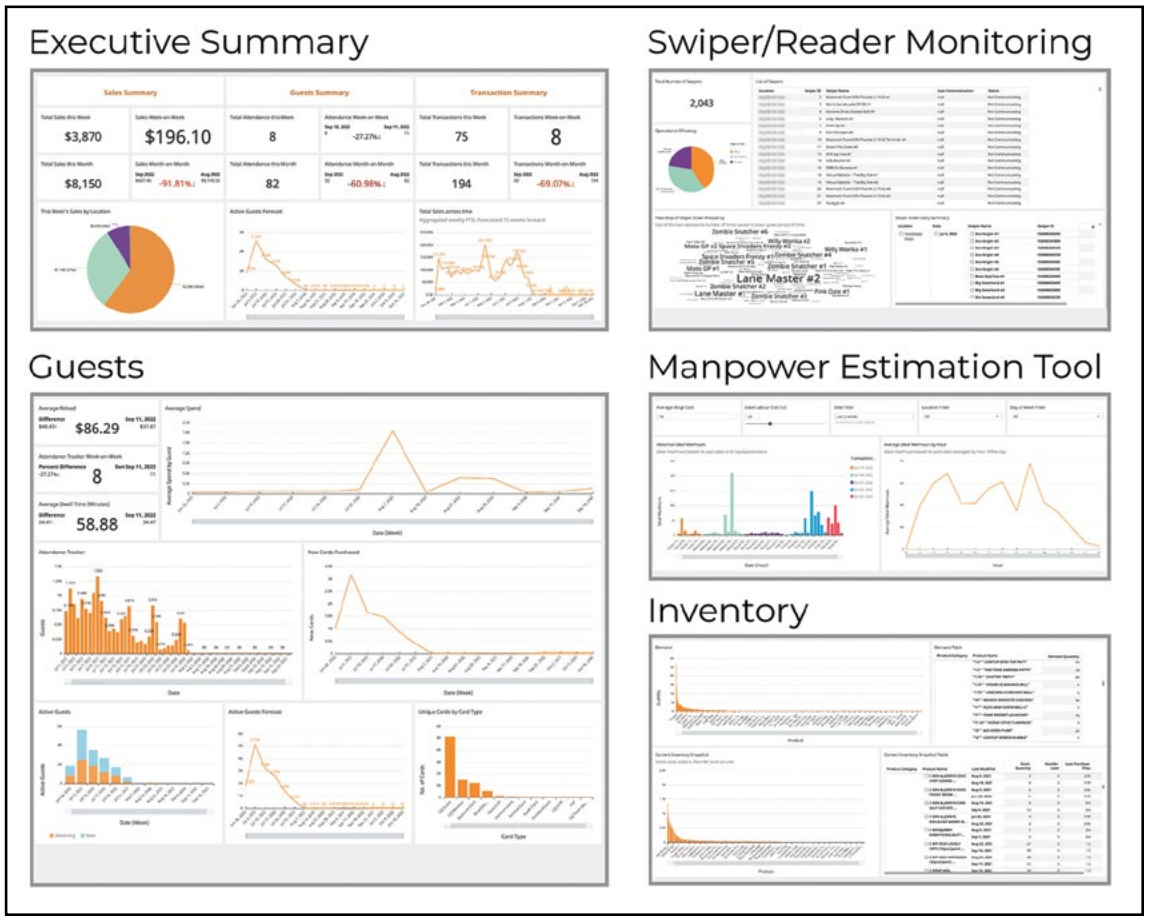
"A lot of businesses find data analysis daunting," added Welsh. "Operators need data collated and analyzed instantly to make informed business decisions immediately. STATS was designed specifically to produce customizable, tailor-fit, realtime reports in a snackable, easy-to-access format according to specific business needs- minus the tech intimidation and data overload."

Embed's current data reports solution REPORTS, an analytics platform, allows operators to access different analytics reports that provide insights into information like game popularity, game revenue, and game profit.

"STATS is a step towards more in-depth, dynamic visualized data reporting. Our customers who use this rely on STATS REPORTS to address challenges with inventory management, loss prevention and revenue management," detailed Welsh.

"As we look at statistics from around the industry, 30% of employees have said that they spend too much time on data manipulation. 45% said they spend all that time and are no wiser. They're putting tables together with spreadsheets and it just becomes a bunch of numbers that show them no real meaning, nothing really derived."

STATS combats this problem. With STATS' in-depth, dynamic visualized data reporting, operators of all business sizes can best manage their business, improve staffing levels and scheduling, reduce manpower waste and forecast revenue based on retro data.



Debuting at IAAPA Expo 2022, Embed's STATS was designed specifically to produce customizable, tailor-fit, realtime reports in a snackable, easy-to-access format according to specific business needs, minus the tech intimidation and data overload. COURTESY EMBED

"We worked with small, medium and large operators — along with Amazon — to really understand their needs and have created very specific dashboards for our industry that will enable to derive the meaning from the numbers and statistics in a matter of seconds," summed up Welsh.

From Mobile Wallet to ECAL to STATS and others, Embed has created a renaissance of valuable information for attraction/FEC owners.

"In an FEC there are so many data points that you can manipulate and look at, but we've really distilled that down into the most important things that can really make a difference to the operation," said Welsh.

As attractions seek to become more immersive, and better cater their expierences to their clientele, the adaptabilty of the FEC environment is something that Embed's tech continues to improve upon.

"If I look at things strategically, if there's one thing we could do a better job at it's loyalty and improving personalization capabilities.

"At the end of the day, it's all about personalization and knowing your guest, knowing your customer," said Welsh. "And utilzing technology to streamline and remove any barriers to entry and friction to the customer for when they arrive.

"There's some really interesting tech that we're experimenting with to look at that. But you never want to introduce technology for technology's sake. You always need to ensure that the guest is ready for that leap."

While Mobile Wallet and STATS were ground-breaking for the FEC community, they are just the beginning of what Embed has planned for continuing to innovate and redefine what's possible for the modern FEC.

"We're committed to ensuring that we're always at the forefront of innovation. We've got some new inventive technologies with **Apple**, **Google** as well as Amazon that we're working on. I can't reveal them yet, but they're coming."

As time goes on, Embed is rapidly becoming an icon of the FEC supplier inudustry. But just as **Bob's Space Racers** has become synonymous with Whac-A-Mole and **Gold Medal** has become forever identified with delicious popcorn, Embed hopes it will forever be identified with technology and innovation.

"Embed would like to be remembered as this tech-blazing company that was so ground-breaking that we transformed the business of fun, changing how these FECs are run and how they are viewed even by the public," summarized Welsh. "We're paving the way for FECs to expand their business offerings so that they become a one-stop shop where there's something for everyone. Technology enables that type of customer experience."

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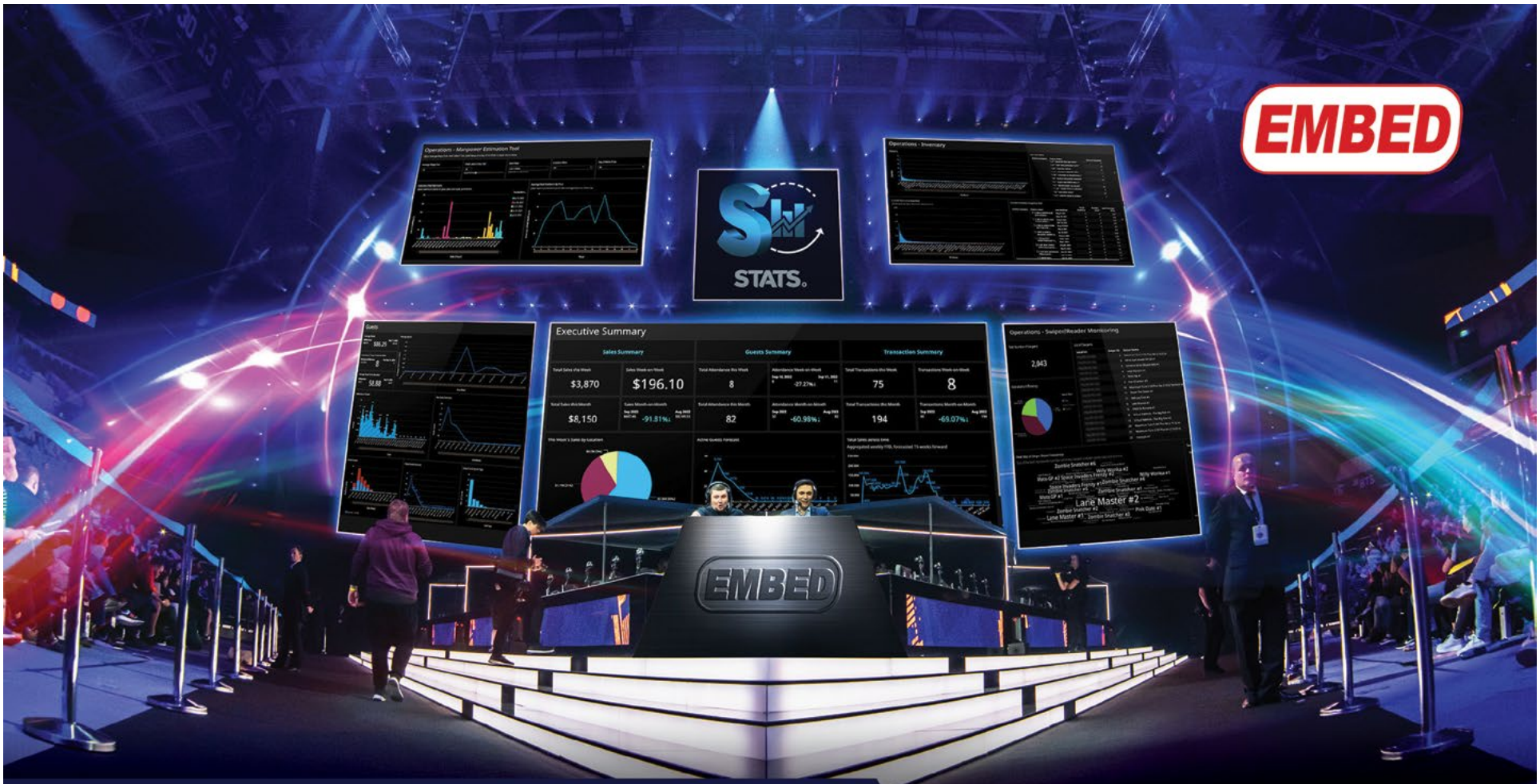

DATA IN A DASH

Who says numbers shouldn't be fun? STATS is the game-changing business intelligence dashboard Embed jointly developed with Amazon; it will make your business insights and reports work hard so you won't have to.

Savvy, Simple, and in a Snap

Get smart, near real-time reports in a state-of-the-art viewer that you can access easily - data at your fingertips anytime, anywhere across all multiple business locations, attractions, and various consumer touchpoints.

Track and Yield

Find your business strength in numbers. Track game and guest activities and get deep insights on:

- Games performance and revenue
- Guest activity, average dwell time, and spending habits
- Manpower analysis
- Inventory management

A Cloud for Your Judgment

Make data-driven business decisions stat! Keep your reports handy and secure with this cloud-based solution, powered by Amazon Web Services (AWS) QuickSight.

Tactical Planning

With its intuitive analysis, you can use STATS for reports on operational planning and forecasting game revenue and sales based on retro data. Learn more about your business as you grow.

Stacks on Stacks

Increase profitability as STATS gives you a free hand to customize your business dashboard with interactive widgets called STACKS. This way, you get bite-sized, easy-to-interpret data to identify key revenue management areas with tangible ROI.

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STATS.

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Executive Summary

Swiper/Reader Monitoring

Guests

Manpower Estimation Tool

Inventory

WATCH VIDEO

ON THE MOVE

Great Wolf Resorts Inc. has appointed a new CEO, **John Murphy**, after the role's incumbent, **Muray Hennessy**, retired.

Murphy is a seasoned hospitality executive with more than 30 years of hospitality leadership experience. He has previously had stints at **Tarsadia Hotels**, **Evolution Hospitality** and **Triton Hospitality**, as well as concurrently serving as board member and adviser for nature-inspired resort brand, **Outdoor Citizen**.

Murphy

"I am absolutely thrilled and honored to be following in Murray's footsteps, leading this incredibly talented and enthusiastic Great Wolf team," commented Murphy. "It's abundantly clear that this is a company with a strong culture that truly cares for its people, setting the foundation for everything the team does to support the mission of bringing joy to families."

Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company announced the addition of **Jennifer M. Prince** to its board of directors, expanding the organization's board to seven directors.

Prince is serving as chief commercial officer for the **Los Angeles Rams** of the **National Football League** and is responsible for all brand and media partnerships and sponsorships. Before her role with the Los Angeles Rams, she spent more than eight years at **Twitter, Inc.** in several leadership positions focused on global content partnerships and media and entertainment. Prince's career spans more than 25 years in digital advertising, sales, content and partnerships with Fortune 500 partners and agencies.

Prince

"We are excited to welcome Jennifer to the board of directors of Hershey Entertainment & Resorts," said **John Lawn**, president of Hershey Entertainment & Resorts. "With broad experience in sales, content development and partnerships, her knowledge and expertise will be a valuable asset to our organization. Jennifer is an accomplished and respected leader who brings a dimension to the board that is vital for our company's ongoing success."

Merlin Entertainments announced the promotion of the company's creative director, **Paul Moreton**, to chief development officer effective January 1, 2023. The promotion follows the announcement in April this year that current Chief Development Officer **Mark 'Fish' Fisher** will retire by the end of 2022, after 27 years at the company.

Moreton

Moreton has had a career with Merlin starting at **Alton Towers** in 1991 before heading up marketing for **Madame Tussauds** and **The London Eye**. He then took on an eight-year stint in television, working in senior roles at *UKTV*, before returning to Merlin in 2012, in his current role as group creative director.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead Merlin Magic Making (MMM) where our focus is on dreaming big ideas and bringing those dreams to life," said Moreton. "MMM is an incredible group of uniquely talented creative, production, project delivery, IP, finance, M&A and HR experts, and I can't wait to build on the outstanding legacy established by Fish."

Canadian smart locker manufacturer **LocketGo** has expanded into the U.S. market with the addition of **Keith Schupp** as vice president of sales for the company's U.S. market. Schupp will be based out of the Colorado area.

Schupp

Excited about the addition, LocketGo CEO **Gabrielle LaRue** offered: "Keith comes to us with over 20 years of Smart Locker experience."

Magic Springs Theme & Water Park hired **Seth Louton** as marketing and sales manager.

Under the leadership of **Michelle Keeney**, director of sales and marketing, Louton will work to strengthen and develop the park's marketing and sales strategies.

Louton

"We are very fortunate to have Seth join our team," said **Jessyka Hanna**, general manager at the park. "He has a long history of working in marketing and sales and his expertise is exactly what we need at Magic Springs. I'm confident that he will continue to help us drive success for 2023."

Before joining the park, he worked as the communications director at the **Reform Alliance** in Little Rock, Arkansas, and in internet marketing and sales at **Pak Plaza** in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Stern Pinball, Inc. announced two executive leadership appointments to support the company's continued growth.

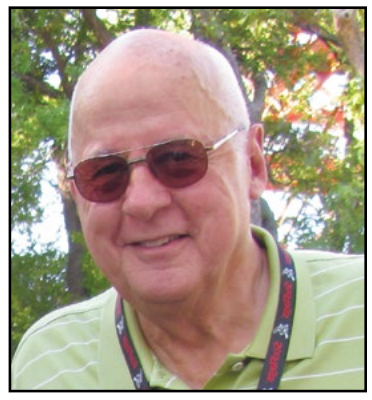
Company Founder **Gary Stern** will step down as CEO but continue as chairman of the board. **Dave Peterson** will continue to serve as vice chairman of the board. Stern and Peterson will remain the controlling shareholders of the company and serve in executive roles on a project basis.

Seth Davis, who joined the company as president in October 2021, will take on the additional role of CEP. A lifelong gamer prior to joining Stern Pinball, Davis spent a combined 21 years at **The Walt Disney Company** and **General Electric Company.** He served in a wide variety of functions and in intrapreneurial roles at increasingly senior levels.

Davis

OBITUARY

Larry Cochran, former Six Flags CEO, passes away


Larry Cochran

MARBLE FALLS, Texas — Longtime amusement industry veteran and former Six Flags CEO, Larry Bennett Cochran achieved the pinnacle of his profession and traveled the world, but he never forgot his roots and the lessons learned on the farm. He was a country boy at heart and very fond of Waylon and Willie and the boys. Cochran passed away on November 26, 2002.

Born and raised in Newton, Mississippi, Cochran was well known for his athleticism, lettering in every sport offered by his high school. It was at a varsity basketball game in the neighboring town of Conehatta that Cochran met the love of his life, Patricia Anne Crane in 1956. He was equally struck by Patricia's beauty and her hook shot. While securing his Texas residency, and with every intention of returning to college to finish his degree, Larry was hired as a temporary draftsman for a start-up company — Six Flags Over Texas — and the rest is history.

Larry Cochran spent his entire 42-year career as a Six Flags employee, climbing from ride operator to CEO. He helped open Six Flags Over Texas in 1961 and was transferred to Atlanta in 1967 to put the finishing touches on Six Flags Over Georgia. But before their moving van ever arrived in Atlanta, Larry and Pat were sent to Eureka, Missouri to help build Six Flags Over Mid-America from the ground up. The Cochrans did stints in New Jersey, California, Chicago, and Dallas, all for Six Flags.

Upon hearing of his passing, Six Flags issued the following statement: "Larry's passion for Six Flags, and the people in it, was second to none. He left an indelible mark on the entire theme park industry, having received the Six Flags Lifetime Achievement Award, being inducted into the IAAPA Hall of Fame, and serving as CEO of Palace Entertainment."

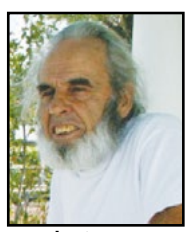
Cochran made his mark on the amusement industry as a whole. In addition to serving as CEO of Six Flags and Palace Entertainment, he served as CEO of Adrenaline Family Entertainment and is a former board member of the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives (2002-2006).

"Larry Cochran helped build today's theme park industry, and along the way, he helped build a generation of leaders who are focused on safety, customer service and employee satisfaction. He was a giant in our industry, who embodied the characteristics we most aspire to. He will be missed by us all," stated Rick Root of the World Waterpark Association.

Walter Florimont passes

MARATHON, Fla. — Walter Florimont quietly passed onto his next great adventure on October 30, 2022.

Born August 1, 1929, in Brooklyn, New York, Florimont grew up accompanying his father to Coney Island to maintain the park's amusement games. At just 16 years old, his parents, confident in his abilities, sent him on the Greyhound Bus, small canvas tool sack in hand, across the country to maintain the games sold in the U.S. So began his love of engineering, improving and ultimately inventing his own games. This would lead to owning and operating his own amusement complex on the beautiful Jersey Shore, bringing fun and enjoyment to countless people for over half a century.


Florimont

An inventor, sailor, diver and explorer, he was a true Adventurer having a profound effect on those around him.

Amusement industry remembers visionary Alberto Zamperla

ORLANDO — During IAAPA Expo 2022, news broke suddenly of the unexpected passing of second-generation president of global amusement manufacturer Zamperla Group — Alberto Zamperla. While his obituary ran in *AT*'s December 2022 issue, to honor this amusement ride innovator, *Amusement Today* has reached out to the industry at large for memories and thoughts on Alberto Zamperla.

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"I will miss my friend. After nearly 50 years, I still remember that I bought a punchball from him on his first trip to the U.S.A. It was at an AMOA convention in Chicago, Illinois. He had come to Chicago with a U-Haul trailer with two punchballs and did not want to return with them. I still use them. In the 1970s and 80s, I purchased from rides from him at the IAAPA Expos. His rides always led in the use of 'flash' with the lighting and electronic sound effects.

"Paula and I visited both Alberto and his gracious wife Paula twice in Italy. He laid out 7-10-day driving tours to ensure that we saw the real Italy (food, wines, and historic sights). How could anyone forget?

"In the early years, Alberto always told me that all his new salesmen were being sent first to Amarillo, Texas, to see a U.S. family amusement park. We made sure that they got to eat real Texas steaks and barbcue. On their return to New Jersey we made the trip memorable by sending Weller Bourbon for his dad, and rib-eyes for Alberto.

"We hosted enjoyable visits with his wife, boys and other family members through the years, The visits were not to sell, but to experience what the U.S. was like.

"Alberto was a man who enjoyed making new rides so that the operator could give the customer a good experience. He enjoyed making the most number and variable type of ride. He was a real leader in our industry."

—Paul Borchardt, Wonderland Park

•

"Alberto was truly genuine. His compassion and caring were incomparable. He embraced child-like wonder with tremendous passion and was committed to ensuring that everyone — regardless of their abilities — would be able to enjoy all of the magic our incredible industry has to offer.

"His boundless generosity will touch the lives of thousands upon thousands of children who visit the Village, children who otherwise may have never been able to experience the joy of riding an attraction. With Lori's Magical Flight and Kelly's Sunny Swing, he gave our guests the precious gift of inclusion, of feeling normal, even if only for a brief moment in time. The ripple effects of his kindness and creativity will be felt for many years to come. My life was truly blessed by his friendship and enriched simply by knowing him."

—Pam Landwirth, Give Kids The World Village

•

"From one family business to another, Knoebels extends our heartfelt sympathies to

the Zamperla family and team. Alberto's legacy will surely live on as park guests around the world continue to enjoy Zamperla creations. In the early 90s, Alberto asked why we hadn't bought another ride from him, and I said it was because we were shopping for a Flying Carousel and he didn't make one. On the spot, he committed to producing one and Zamperla's first Flying Carousel thrills Knoebels guests to this day. I think that story speaks volumes about his character and the quality of the product his company delivers."

—Dick Knoebel, Knoebels Amusement Resort

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"Being in Alberto's orbit for the last 10 years of my life has provided so much value, humor, opportunity and wisdom. I'm forever grateful to the roads he paved and freedoms given to me and so many others through his hard work and dedication. I miss the man, the legend, the friend; but the inspiration he has provided will live on forever."

—Michael Coleman, Zamperla

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"We've lost a true legend in our industry. It's a sad time, thinking about all the fun he created for literally millions of people around the world and the impact that he made as innovator of attractions, from roller coasters to family rides."

—Don Helbig, Kings Island

•

"Alberto Zamperla was a true visionary in our industry and a leader that continually reinvested in his teams and companies growing them to where they are today. From the early days of Mini Jets to the rapid growth of the company's family — and flat — ride portfolio to the founding of an operations division to their most recent reinvestment in the Zamperla coasters division, the continued growth of the Zamperla group would not have been possible without Alberto's vision. The industry has lost a great one, but his legacy will carry on forever."

—Mark Rosenzweig, 3dx Scenic

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"He was part of our industry's greatest generation. A giant of whom so many owe so much. What can you say about someone who used their time and talent to manufacture joy? The best thing someone can do with their life is leave this world better because of how they lived. Mr. Zamperla certainly did that; one smile at a time, billions of times. The general public did not know him personally, but so many of their happy memories are because of him. A finer legacy does not exist. His fortitude carries on through this family. May his memory be eternal."

—Deno (DJ) Vourderis, Deno's Wonder Wheel Park

•

"With the loss of Alberto, we lost a true icon in our industry. Not only did he make Zamperla one of the world market leaders in this industry, but he was also a great supporter of IAAPA. A well-deserved member of the IAAPA Hall of Fame, his presence will be missed at our events."

—Jakob Wahl, IAAPA

•

"It is impossible to write in few words what Alberto represented for my family and me. I still carry in my wallet, laminated by Gary Story, the ad I answered as a young, 27-year-old engineer that changed my life forever moving from a small town in Italy to the U.S.A. Alberto has been my mentor for 32 years and my family and I owe him everything we have. I was very fortunate to find a boss who trusted me and gave me the opportunity to make a lot of mistakes and a lot of successful things. He always backed me up in good and bad times, and made decisions that could have changed the history of his company in matter of minutes, while other organizations would have taken hours of board meetings. This was thanks to the trust we had of each other and our complete synchronization. I couldn't have been luckier to find him in my life path, and I miss him a lot."

—Valerio Ferrari, Zamperla

•

"The sudden passing of Alberto Zamperla is not only a loss to his family and to Italy, but also to our amusement industry. His willingness to grow the company from kiddie rides to mid-sized rides and now to coasters shows the same vision and drive he had for the Luna Park rebirth at Coney Island. I'm most thankful of the opportunity he and Valerio Ferrari gave *Amusement Today* when they wanted to host the Golden Ticket Awards in 2015. The Friday night reception at Victorian Gardens and New York City's Central Park, followed by the Saturday tour of Luna Park and Golden Ticket Awards ceremony was THE event that is still talked about today. Alberto and his Zamperla family were the perfect family hosts. I will miss my friend."

—Gary Slade, Amusement Today

•

"With the passing of President Alberto Zamperla, we have all lost a piece of our hearts. He left his mark on each of us, and we will always keep him in our fondest memory.

"We will carry on his legacy of respect, kindness and generosity so that Zamperla Group will always remain a beautiful workplace where people feel they have a special mission: to give smiles to young and old children around the world."

—The Zamperla team

MARKET WATCH

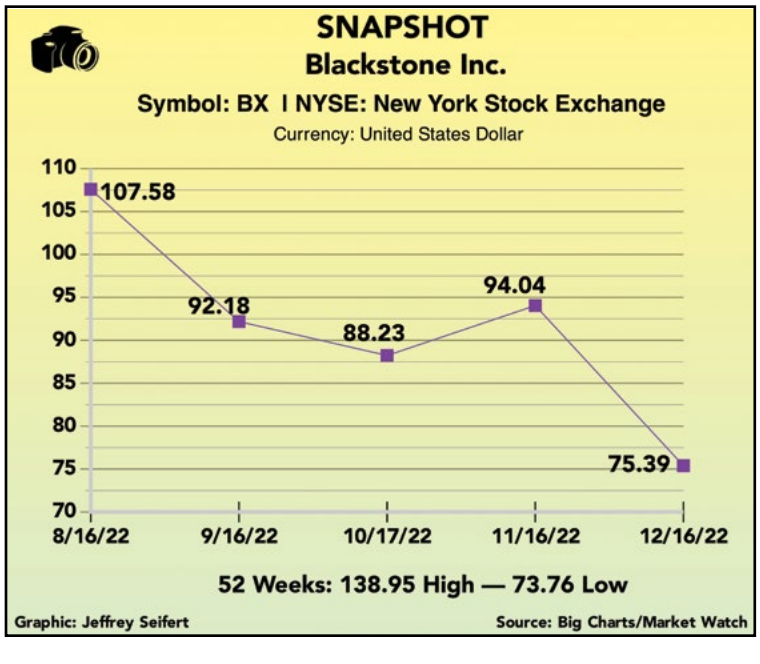
COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 12/15/22	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	77.40	138.94	74.55
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	39.72	62.56	37.78
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	34.61	52.10	28.39
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	90.49	160.32	86.28
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	40.71	56.38	34.58
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	4925.00	5130.00	3650.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.49	4.29	0.81
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	17.10	19.95	15.40
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	36.22	49.00	26.41
Royal Carribean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	54.66	90.55	31.09
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	819.00	926.00	702.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	54.16	76.57	40.01
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	21.43	47.24	16.83
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	780.00	900.00	650.00

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED
***Dubai Parks and Resorts halted trading on the Dubai Financial Market due to an acquisition by Meraas Leisure and Entertainment LLC earlier this year.**

Worldwide Markets: ASX, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; **TSEC**, Taiwan Stock Exchange, Corp.; **TYO/TSE**, Tokyo Stock Exchange

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal

Theme park Toverland achieved a new milestone in the park's history as it welcomed its one millionth visitor of the year on Saturday, December 17, 2023. COURTESY TOVERLAND



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 12/12/22	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	$5.007	$1.374
Midwest	$4.651	$1.139
Gulf Coast	$4.344	$0.972
Mountain	$5.027	$1.269
West Coast	$5.227	$1.078
California	$5.562	$0.787

CURRENCY

On 12/16/22 $1 USD =	
0.9397	EURO
0.8129	GBP (British Pound)
136.67	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9273	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4775	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3602	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Apple Industries announces NASCAR deal

GREENVALE, N.Y. — During the recent IAAPA Expo 2022, **Apple Industries**, manufacturer of faceplace photo booths, announced the company's exclusive licensing arrangement with the hugely popular **NASCAR** auto racing entertainment brand.

At the announcement, **Cole McGinnis**, senior manager of licensing and consumer products for NASCAR, offered a look at the racing giant's marketing strategy as it celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2023. At the core is a broadening of the brand to bring in new fans by expanding into street wear, entertainment venues and even arcade games. McGinnis stated that independent research has shown that NASCAR fans are the top in brand loyalty among the professional sports leagues in the U.S.

"The brand is in a good place," said McGinnis, "it's going beyond the traditional NASCAR to become a lifestyle brand."

"We are always looking for famous brands that are expanding," said Apple President **Scott Avery**. "With NASCAR we are leveraging the horsepower of a multi-billion dollar IP brand so that as they accelerate, we gain momentum as well. It's like 'drafting' in stock car racing and it's a win-win for both brands."

Tokyo DisneySea wins 2022 Applause Award

ORLANDO — Biannually, since 1980, the prestigious **Liseberg** Applause Award honors a park whose management, operations and creative accomplishments have inspired the industry with foresight, originality and sound business development.

After a four-year pause, the Applause Award is again celebrating the best-of-the-best parks in the world. Presented during the opening ceremonies of IAAPA Expo 2022, the winner of the 2022 Applause Award was Japan's **Tokyo DisneySea**.

"With a mix of world-class attractions, exceptional shows, outstanding theming and flawless operation, this park is regarded by many as almost perfect," said **Andreas Veilstrup Andersen**, president and CEO, Liseberg Group and chairman of The Applause Award Board of Governors "When it was built in 2001, it was one of the most ambitious park developments ever. And Tokyo DisneySea still is one of the most beautiful theme parks in the world."

Falcon's Beyond adding Philippines office

ORLANDO — **Falcon's Beyond** announced plans to expand the company's footprint internationally with a new office scheduled to open in Metro Manila in early 2023.

Falcon's Creative Philippines, Inc. is expected to employ approximately 20 new associates within the next quarter to support and expand **Falcon's Creative Group**, a division of Falcon's Beyond that provides master planning, creative design, media and audio production, attraction systems and experiential technology to customers around the world. The new office's team of local talent will include illustrators, architectural designers, modelers, and artists, as well as media and interactive gaming designers who will serve as an extension of the company's Orlando-based family of nearly 100 associates. This new international team will work on world-class projects in the themed entertainment space.

"As someone of Filipino descent, it has been a lifelong dream of mine, as well as my father, to open a Falcon's office in the Philippines and support its vast array of local talent," said **Cecil D. Magpuri**, CEO of Falcon's Beyond. "We are excited to expand our company's footprint globally and build a team of passionate storytellers and creatives to support our portfolio of high-profile international entertainment projects."

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January 2023 | Vol. 26 • Issue 10 Digital Edition

IAAPA Expo 2022 returns event to pre-pandemic attendance levels

Event nears 37,000 attendees, exceeds 1,000 exhibitors

AT: *David Fake*
Special to Amusement Today

Under the direction of Jim Pattison, Jr., president of Ripley Entertainment, IAAPA's incoming chairman, IAAPA Expo 2022 opening ceremony attendees participated in a raucous, yet successful Guinness World Record attempt at having the most people launch streamer cannons simultaneously. AT/DAVID FAKE

ORLANDO — After seeing IAAPA Expo 2020 cancelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by limited attendance at IAAPA Expo 2021 due to limited ability for international participation, the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** saw a substantial increase in its official numbers over the preceding year. For IAAPA Expo 2022, which ran November 14-18, the number of registered attendees reached nearly 37,000 with qualified buyers clocking in at nearly 25,600 and exhibiting companies surpassing 1,000. Those in attendance and exhibiting represented over 104 different countries.

"We set out this year to bring a fresh and innovative Expo experience to showcase the best of the attractions industry and we certainly accomplished that," said **Michael Shelton**, executive director and vice president for **IAAPA North America**. "We filled more than 518,000 square feet of exhibit space and presented more than 100 on-site educational sessions. The incredible speakers and content presented along with the largest trade show in the industry surely inspired all who attended."

The global attraction industry's premier international event unofficially opened Monday, November 14 with a program that included educational opportunities and industry highlights that only IAAPA can offer. These included EDUTours at **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay** and **Walt Disney World's Blizzard Beach**, as well as seven EDUTours, more than 50 networking opportunities and a variety of charity events benefiting **Give Kids the World Village**.

In total, participating IAAPA Expo 2022 attendees raised over $157,000 through several coordinated events such as the 19th Annual IAAPA International Charity Golf Tournament, the 12th Annual IAAPA Charity Motorcycle Run benefiting Give Kids the World, and the 16th Annual IAAPA Footprints From the Heart 5K Run/1-Mile Walk Benefiting Give Kids The World Village. In total there were 108 golfers, 23 motorcycle riders and 401 runners who participated in these fundraising events.

IAAPA Expo 2022 officially kicked off Tuesday, November 15 with an opening program that under the direction of **Jim Pattison, Jr.**, president of **Ripley Entertainment**, IAAPA's incoming chairman, concluded with a raucous, yet successful **Guinness World Record** attempt to have the most people launch streamer cannons simultaneously (1,116 streamer cannons in total!).

Immediately following the opening program, attendees were provided with official Guinness Book of World Records certificated commemorating the accomplishment. Exhibitors and attendees then filled the halls of the **Orange County Convention Center** for four days focused on discussing critical business needs, education sessions and panels, networking opportunities, and the time to discover the latest products and innovations on the Expo floor.

"It has been wonderful to see the continued recovery of the global attractions industry," said **Hal McEvoy**, IAAPA's president and chief executive officer. "I'm proud of our team, partners, and volunteers for executing a great show in Orlando that benefits our members and our community."

Later Tuesday afternoon, **Themed Entertainment Association (TEA)**, which represents compelling places and experiences worldwide, announced this year's Thea Award winners. These awards presented by the nonprofit, recognize individuals, projects and technologies in the area of themed attractions and experiences each year. In 2022 there were 20 indi-

▸ See IAAPA, page 2B

Exhibitors and attendees filled the halls of the Orange County Convention Center for four days focused on discussing critical business needs, education sessions and panels, networking opportunities as well as the opportunity to discover the latest products and innovations on the Expo floor. AT/TIM BALDWIN

IAAPA

Continued from page 1B

viduals honored for their creative efforts.

Thea award winners included **Roland Mack**, founder and managing partner of **Europa-Park**, Germany, who received the Buzz Price Award, which recognizes a lifetime of distinguished achievements.

Two recipients were awarded the Catalyst Award, which recognizes individual contributions to industry advancement. This year's winners were **Susanna Tubert**, creative director for **Disney Live Entertainment, Disneyland Parks & Resorts**, and **Chevy Humphrey**, president & CEO of the **Museum of Science & Industry**, Chicago, and board chair of the **American Alliance of Museums**.

Disney's Main Street Electrical Parade at **Disneyland** walked away with the Classic Award celebrating a guest experience that has stood the test of time.

A comprehensive list of Thea Award winners can be found on the TEA website.

"Our field is constantly changing. Honoring these recipients from around the world highlights their success in bringing forth highly engaging, out-of-the-home visitor attractions and experiences in the leisure and travel sectors," said Thea committee chair **Fri Forjindam**. "They are everything from problem solvers to specialists that create what our imaginations can only dream of and bring it all to fruition."

Winners of the prestigious industry-focused 2022 IAAPA Brass Ring Awards were announced in the late afternoon of Thursday, November 17 during a special ceremony that marked the return of the in-person celebration for the first time since 2019.

The annual awards recognize amusement parks, water parks, zoos, aquariums, museums, family entertainment centers (FECs), and suppliers from around the world for excellence in food and beverage, games and retail, human resources, live entertainment, marketing, new products, and exhibits.

During IAAPA Expo 2022, which ran November 14-18, the number of registered attendees reached nearly 37,000 with qualified buyers clocking in at nearly 25,600 and exhibiting companies surpassing 1,000. Those in attendance and exhibiting represented over 104 different countries. AT/DAVID FAKE

Like *Amusement Today's* **Golden Ticket Awards**, The IAAPA Brass Ring Awards are considered one of the global attractions industry's most prestigious honors.

SeaWorld Entertainment and **Walt Disney World** were big winners at the ceremony, the latter walking away with nine awards this year.

"There's something special about coming together as an industry and cheering each other on when this year's [Brass Ring] finalists were so strong in each category," said Pattison. "Celebrating industry-wide innovations and successes is a win for all of us."

The tradition of the brass ring, a term now synonymous with spectacular achievement, harkens back to the 1800s when rings were hung within reach of carousel riders to pose a fun challenge for riders. Most rings were made of iron, and only a few were made of brass. Successfully grabbing a brass ring while riding the carousel earned riders prizes, often including an additional free ride. Grabbing the brass ring was a coveted and celebrated treat.

A comprehensive list of IAAPA Brass Ring Award winners can be found on the IAAPA website.

On Thursday evening, attendees who purchased upcharge event tickets, were treated to the thrills of one of Orlando's top theme parks with the signature IAAPA Celebrates event held this year at **Universal's Islands of Adventures** theme park. At the celebratory event, attendees were given the opportunity to network with their industry peers and enjoy specialty food and beverage as they were permitted private access to nearly a dozen rides and several themed sections within the award-winning park.

With many deals signed or initiated by enthusiastic — but exhausted — attendees and exhibitors over its five days, IAAPA Expo 2022 concluded at 4:00 pm on Friday, November 18.

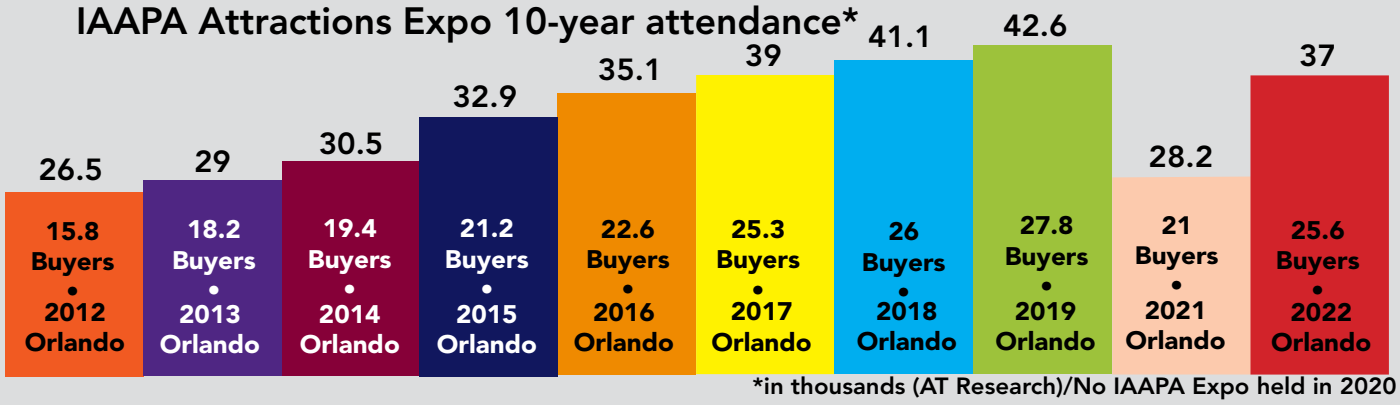
Planning for IAAPA Expo 2023 is already well under way. The show which will take place November 13-17, 2023, has seen strong early interest from exhibitors with 227 exhibitors reserving over 126,900 square feet of contracted booth space, according to IAAPA.

•iaapa.org

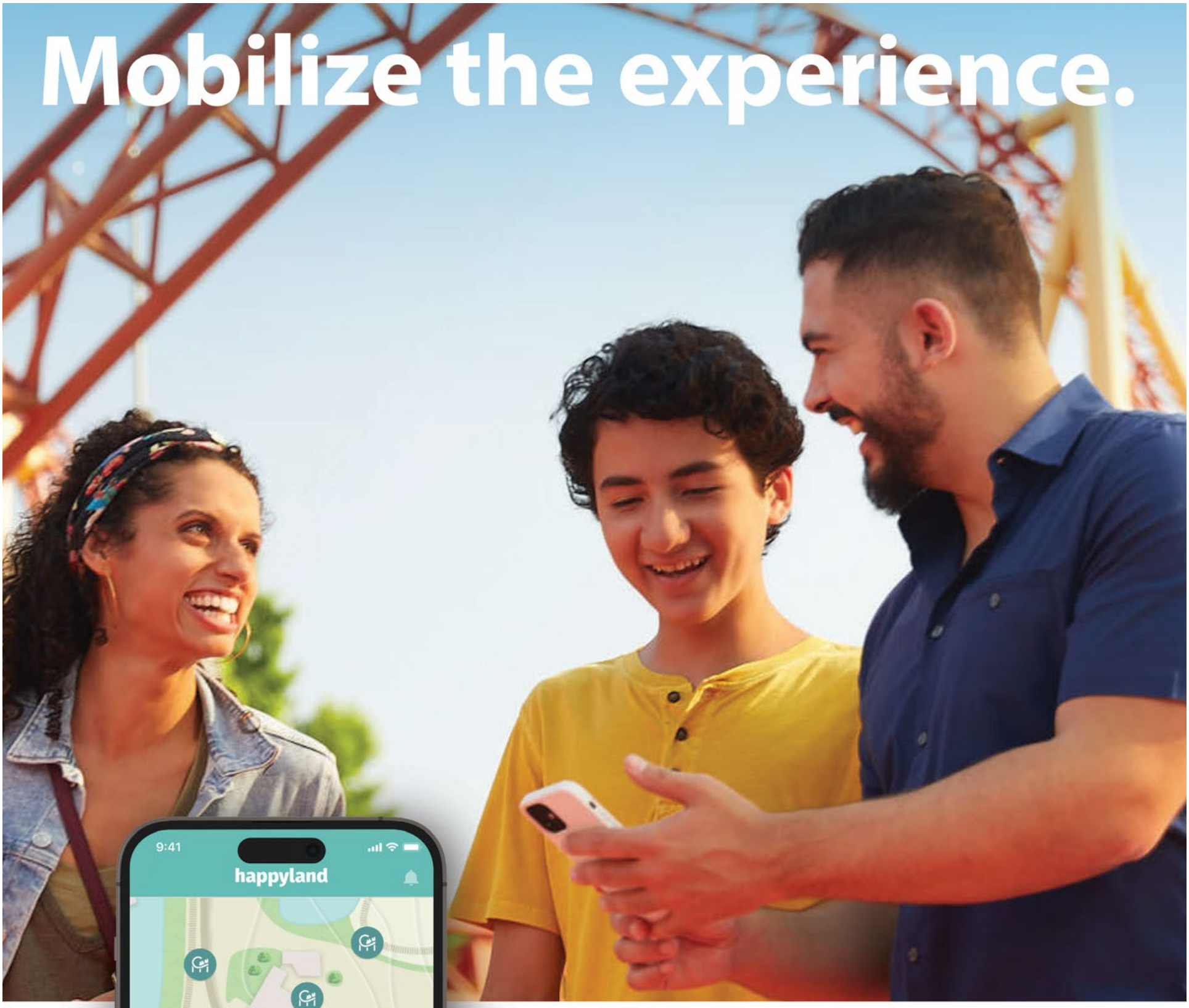
FASTFACTS

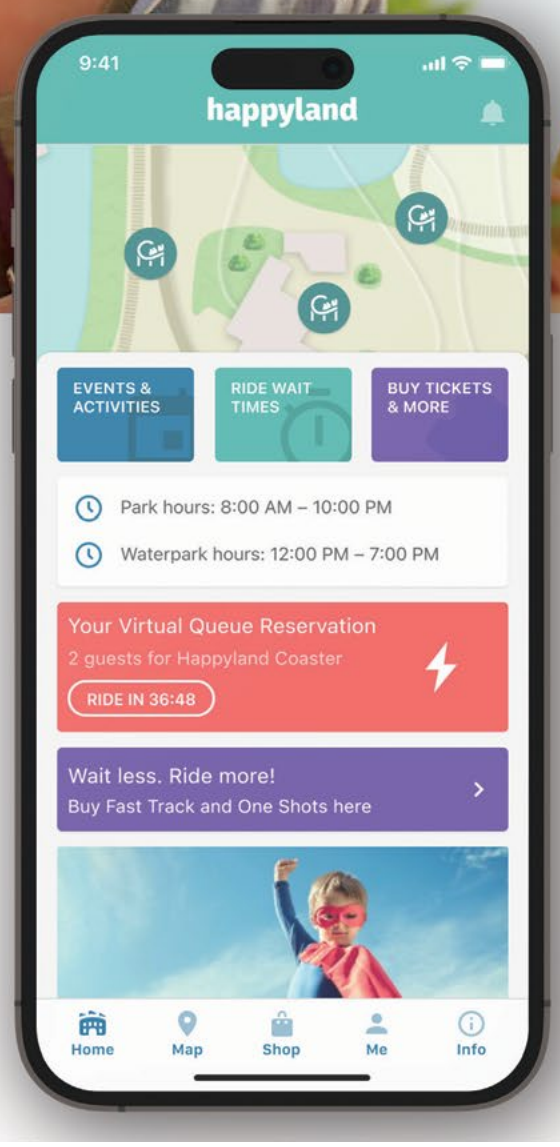
IAAPA EXPO

IAAPA Attractions Expo 10-year attendance*



*in thousands (AT Research)/No IAAPA Expo held in 2020





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IAAPA 2022

Manufacturers enjoy busy Expo, look forward to successful 2023

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Skyline Attractions' Aurora lighting captivated passersby with its flashy coaster track (above left). The ride vehicle of SeaWorld San Diego's Arctic Rescue was revealed at the Intamin booth on the first day (above right). Officials from Vekoma and Dollywood board a vehicle created for Dollywood's Big Bear Mountain, opening in 2023 (below).
AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY VEKOMA

ORLANDO — With attendance significantly jumping when compared to 2021, the IAAPA Expo 2022 found manufacturers busy with both appointments and walk-up customers. *Amusement Today* talked to numerous suppliers.

"Last year was a record year for us from a revenue standpoint, coming off COVID which was a record in the other direction," said **Jeff Pike**, president, **Skyline Attractions**. "This year, we are absolutely stoked. This is the first year since starting Skyline that we have had to tell people, 'Sorry, we're booked. We can't do the job [for 2023].' We are booked out to where any deliveries would be the beginning of 2024."

Two large racing models of Skyline Attraction's P'Sghetti Bowl coasters have been contracted for the upcoming summer season.

"We are going to be introducing our Aurora lighting package on both rides," said Pike. "We can do that because our P'Sghetti coaster track uses the weld-free riveted track technology when we developed Titan Track for Great Coasters. We had that flat surface, so we put that Aurora light package — which is the same type that you see on outdoor billboards — along the track and have arranged for modules that still allow for inspections on the riveted sections and allows for the proper spacing. It looks so sleek."

The display of lighting going down the center of the single rail track was a real eye-catcher on the floor, ranging from fireworks, colored bands and wording.

Skyline also introduced Trail Runner, a terrain-hugging, low-to-the-ground single rail coaster at the Expo.

"It's a legit family coaster that has full-size seating for two adults but also goes down to 40-inch children riding it. It's intended to enhance the visuals of speed by keeping everything close to the ground. Our weld-free track is beefier, it's more robust and can handle the heavier loads," Pike told *AT*.

Intamin is enjoying several projects in the U.S. in 2023, including two snowmobile-style coasters, one of which had an unveiling. The manufacturer is also touting its launched flume, the first of its kind.

"We have two attractions in the pre-project phase where this feature is incorporated," said **Sascha Czibulka,** executive vice president. "We're confident it will reach the execution phase. It confirms our approach to develop new features for classic rides, such as the log flume or rapids ride."

By incorporating a switch track on **Busch Gardens Williamsburg**'s snowmobile coaster, which Czibulka calls a "smart feature," it maximizes the space. Intamin has introduced switch track on several installations.

Outside the U.S., Intamin has multiple projects. Toutatis at **Parc Astérix** will speed through the French themer at 66 mph and reach a height of 167 feet. Track length is more than 3,500 feet. "We're very, very, very much looking forward to it," said Czibulka. A multi-launch coaster in Southern Europe and an indoor coaster also open in Europe for 2023.

Going into the Expo, Intamin promoted its vertical launch coaster, which it debuted in 2022. "It adds a lot to the experience. I was lucky enough to experience it in Dubai and all I can say is fantastic," said Czibulka.

He also says Intamin is striking a new balance where former coaster dominance is equalizing to a blend of coaster rides and water attractions. Gyro Swings are also popular. The company's Dome Motion Theater will also debut in 2023.

Vekoma enjoyed the luxury of a massive press announcement on the first morning of the trade show, as well as the final press announcement of the week on Friday afternoon. The company is excited to re-enter the U.S. market in a big way. With Walt Disney World's Tron (soon to open) and EPCOT's new coaster debuting in 2022, Vekoma has two notable installations at both **Dollywood** and **Cotaland**, the latter being the reintroduction of an upgraded tilt coaster.

In Europe, Vekoma installations include a family-launched coaster at **Furuviks Parken** and a custom family boomerang at **Liseberg**. A mine train coaster is set to open at **Energylandia**.

"Our Fønix at **Farüp Sommerland** won two awards for the Best New Coaster in Europe (2022) award, and we are very proud of that," said **Carin Davits**, marketing. "You can combine family and thrill in one ride."

"We have a product for every category of coaster," said **Ricardo Etges**, division sales. "Everyone loves [the flying coaster] at **Phantasialand**. We've been getting a lot of traction from that product. It's a completely different type of coaster."

After an impressive five family boomerang coasters were installed in 2022, three more are on tap for 2024.

Speaking of Dollywood, **Ride Entertainment** will be overseeing the coaster's installation.

"Our installation team has already been on site installing the coaster," said **Amanda Mercado**, president, installations and business development. "It's almost a mile of track; it's a very impressive installation. Our installation branch is doing very well; we've been able to bring on more full-time employees. We've increased how many projects we are able to install within a year."

Ride Entertainment was showcasing a mini safari car at its booth. The company has partnered with a new supplier, **Longfish Leisure**.

"It's strictly a rev share partnership," said **Eli Parawan**, chief operating

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officer, parks and attractions. "It's a small vehicle that's really built for offroad, year-round and in all types of weather conditions. Part of its appeal is its flexibility with footprint."

Contrary to the auto ride vehicles that are dependent on a guide rail, this one is specifically designed for different terrains. It is also designed to be kid-sized, but adults are able to sit with feet inside the vehicle and sit up top aside the child. The vehicles travel at 3 mph, even if more than one adult is seated.

"It's an incredibly capable car," added Mercado.

"There is very little infrastructure required," noted **Kris Rowberry**, communications.

Ride Entertainment supplies SkyCoaster installations. News on that front involves an automated video recording system to capture the rider experience with multiple cameras.

"It's all just at a touch of a button," said Rowberry. "There's no cameraman required anymore."

ETF Ride Systems did not announce anything new at this year's Expo. However, on the heels of several awards for their ride system collaborations with Sally Corporation, **Ruud Koppens**, ETF president, explained that they were promoting their trackless water ride system they announced last year.

Chance Rides displayed a Thomas train vehicle headed to Mattel Adventure Park in Arizona (above). A multi-terrain vehicle was on display at the Ride Entertainment booth, which represented a new partnership with Longfish Leisure (right). AT/TIM BALDWIN

"So, we call that the Aqua Mover," said Koppens. "What we do on land with the trackless driving, we can do in water now. Basically, you don't have to use the guides you have needed in the water," he added.

To make this work, the "boat" ride vehicle actually drives on the floor bottom of the water, which is less than a half-foot deep. The vehicle's motion simulator adds the floating feel for the ride.

"You don't see anything that lets you know you are not floating, but you feel like you are floating," Koppens said. "It's a new challenge we have been asked for more and more often. For people say, 'We like trackless technology. Can you do this and water?' We used the COVID downtime to develop that."

Dynamic Attractions just came off the success of the award-winning motion theater attraction at **Futuroscope**.

"We can't release the details on our next project, but based on the wild success, we've so much interest in that ride system," said **Steve Warner**, director of creative. "We develop a ride with a vision of what that ride will bring to the market from a guest experience standpoint. We can geek out over it from an engineering standpoint, but the reality is it has to translate into a tangible experience that guests come away from wanting to do it again."

Warner feels customers are seeing the success as a blank canvas for whatever story each property wants to tell.

Dynamic Attractions noted that the highest interest at the Expo was in regard to the 24-seat flying theater. **Mattel Adventure Park** in Arizona will be installing a Barbie-themed 39-seat theater.

"What we've seen in the marketplace are that the bigger capital expenditures are still tough to do; people are finding it hard to pull the trigger," said **Guy Nelson**, chairman and CEO. "What we decided to do was bring something that was more affordable. It's really resonating with a whole lot of people. That opens up the number of locations to go into existing facilities."

The special effects coaster, which Nelson describes as the most complex coaster ever built, will soon be opening in Abu Dhabi in 2023.

The Bone Shaker coaster vehicle at the Chance booth was stunning. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Chance Rides had some of the finest-looking vehicles on display. The company is also providing attractions at the upcoming Mattel Adventure Park. The coaster car for Bone Shaker, one of two roller coasters from Chance, garnered attention. In addition, the Thomas and Friends train was a monumental showpiece at the Expo.

"It's way bigger than our traditional train," said **Jay Aguilar**, vice president of sales and marketing. "The whole idea with Thomas is this size. The good news for Chance is that we now have the bones, the structure, to put any dress on it. The size of the coaches will be increased to match the engine. It's just larger in general."

Aguilar reports the sale of several carousels and C.P. Huntington trains for 2023. Ferris wheels also saw a keen interest.

Dick Chance, president, added, "Three years ago we redesigned the C.P. Hunting with a battery-powered electric drive. Sales have shot up. We used to sell two or three gas-powered C.P. Huntingtons a year (after building 400); we just sold 21 trains in the last two years. Eighty percent of our replacement trains — and a lot of zoos do it because they want to be green — is electric. There's zero maintenance to do on the electric [components].

"The show has been fantastic. We probably have the largest backlog of sales we've had in the last 20 years. A lot of our business isn't theme parks anymore; it's entertainment areas, zoos and those types of venues that aren't typical amusement parks. The whole industry has changed a lot."

Premier Rides had two surprising announcements. The first, by partnering with **Wieland Schwarzkopf**, the company is developing a newer, taller, faster version of the classic **Anton Schwarzkopf** Wildcat. The new ride will be available in 2024, which would be Anton's 100th birthday. The new product is marketed as Wildcat Retro 2.0.

In a second press event, the coaster company announced it will be supplying two roller coasters for New Jersey's **Steel Pier**, a spinning mouse coaster and a Sky Rocket II multi-launch coaster. One will be installed in 2024, with the other installed the following year.

Technical Park show-

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Steam Flyer is a new version of the Magic Carpet style ride from Zierer, featuring suspended seating (above left). Wieland Schwarzkopf signed autographs at the Premier booth (above middle). Premier is remarketing the Anton Schwarzkopf Wildcat coaster — bigger and faster. Maurer Rides displayed its new Spike Fun system with a ride vehicle and this model that showcased the Omega Loop maneuver (above right).
COURTESY ZIERER; AT/TIM BALDWIN

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cased its Sidecar XL model flatride which debuted at **Playland Park** in Rye, New York, this past summer, marking the manufacturer's first U.S. installation of the model, which is an extra -redesign of their best seller, the interactive Sidecar.

The Old Rye Motorbike Factory is designed with gondolas shaped like a motorbike with attached sidecar but can also be customized in any way offering two seats with independent safety restraints.

Twelve arms are hinged on the top crown structure and actuated by air cylinders with interactive control by the riders. The ride offers 24 seats, which is a 50% increase in capacity from its smaller predecessor.

"Each car is independently controlled by the rider. So, they can play like they want, and it is not run by the ride system. The rider can play the game in order to get the maximum height and create competition for them with the passengers in near cars," said **Carlo Gugliemi**, USA-Canada sales manager for Technical Park.

"At the show we have been in touch with several new buyers. The feedback from the Playland ride is very positive from the public, which is always encouraging," Gugliemi added.

Many companies remarked how the show's second day was even stronger than the first. **The Gravity Group** was one example.

"Wednesday just seemed to have all the right people with good conversations," said **Chad Miller**, principal. "People are trying to get the amusement industry back on track, and it showed on Wednesday. We got questions like, 'What can we do by 2024?' That's the kind of questions I like."

The company's award-winning precut track brought in a lot of high interest. The Gravity Group has had heavy work in refurbishments with the precut track. Three projects took place in 2022, with nine contracted for 2023. The company has beefed up its crew and equipment to meet demand.

All new coaster projects going forward will use the precut track concept.

Zierer stated it was very satisfied with the Expo. Many of the company's 2023 projects were still under NDAs at the time of the show, but officials could share that a lot of deliveries would be going to Asia and a jet ski ride would be a new attraction at **Calloway Park**.

"The jet ski ride has been put into the **Legoland** parks, most recently the one in New York," said **Bill Ossim**, North America sales.

Legoland in Germany will also be installing a double family tower for 2023, another of the company's sought-after rides.

Zierer introduced a new concept for the show, Ellipse Flyer. This is an updated Magic Carpet-type ride with suspended seating. Ossim said it would be available late 2024 or early 2025. Spin N' Play is a new smaller attraction where children play on a slowly rotating disc with soft play elements. "It allows adults to sit back in a shaded area around it and decompress," noted Ossim.

Another new concept from Zierer is the dueling reverse coaster. Two trains run a shuttle coaster experience side by side as trains pass each other in close proximity both forward and backward. Mini launch coaster is also a new product for a compact footprint that uses new technology to launch three single four-seater cars in a tight space of 23 by 28 meters (75 by 92 feet). Both could be available possibly by 2024.

When asked by *AT* for his "vision," **Nathan Jones**, new president for **Martin & Vleminckx**, laughed, "I'm one month into the role." He continued, "I came here because of the foundation that had been built. For 35 years, Martin & Vleminckx has meant quality and determination to the craft of building wooden roller coasters is really unprecedented."

Just two weeks after the close of the IAAPA Expo, M&V's latest creation was to be unleashed, Leviathan at **SeaWorld** in Austrailia. [Look for a complete story in the February issue of *AT*.]

"The extended vision is beyond roller coasters, including the IP from **Bill Kitchen**," Jones added. "It's bringing some complementary and really unique steel attractions as well."

Just prior to the show, M&V gained the rights to Kitchen's **U.S. Thrill Rides** portfolio, including the UniCoaster and Sky Blazer.

"There was a long-term relationship between Bill and [M&V's] **Chuck Bingham** after many decades. Bill was a visionary. He's at a time to where he wants to enjoy life. It graduated to being a good home for the portfolio. I wanted his IP to live on."

"We are obviously promoting more products at the show," noted **Eve Melanson**, marketing.

Last year, **Altitude Rides and Attractions, LLC**, manufacturer of the Soaring Eagle Zipline ride, introduced their Soaring Eagle Daring Drop, a launch/drop tower ride.

This year, Altitude added the Hammered ride to their lineup. This ride is a unique, interative combination of their launch/drop tower and a hammer/bell carnival game, where the harder the hit, the faster and higher the riders go. Since sensitivity automatically adjusts to the size of the person with the hammer, younger and littler "players" can have the same impact on the experience of the riders.

Company President and CEO **Logan Checketts** informed *AT* that immediately following the show, he was traveling across the country to deliver the show floor's two display models, one of which was sold pre-Expo and the other at the show.

Huss Park Attractions privately discussed five signature attractions with prospective park buyers. The only publicly announced new attraction from the manufacturer is the Break Dance 5, which was announced at IAAPA Expo Europe last year.

Lars Hartmann, the international sales manager for Huss Park Attractions said, "Basically, there are five signature rides which we presented to the industry this year. We do not announce the names or the types yet publicly, but we showed them to many clients.

"We are already working on the Break Dance; it is basically number one of the five signature rides line. And the first one is in production. The public opening is next year," said Hartmann. "The other

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ones are basically also high capacity flat rides. [The rides] utilize a lot of new features, cool new movements and are ideal for theme parks. They are rides that amusement parks will really want as a highlight in the park.

"All are major capacity with over 1200 people an hour in capacity with the highest standard of safety and beautiful options for theming and illumination," added Hartmann.

Rocky Mountain Construction had considerable traffic.

"It's gone really well. A lot of productive meetings, a lot of interest in a lot of products," said **Jake Kilcup**, COO. "The single rail really has taken off since COVID. Everyone had a bit of a downturn, but it's really picking up, and we're really excited about the single-rail platform. We're also looking to upsize that rail a bit for side-by-side seating and keep pushing the limits."

One of the big moments for RMC was its unveiling of the lead car for **Hersheypark**'s Wildcat's Revenge.

"It's the first thing people are going to see — this big underflip element," Kilcup said. "I'm so excited for that."

ArieForce One at FunSpot Atlanta is also an RMC project set to debut in early 2023.

On display were the three types of track that RMC supplies. The 208 track is developed for spots on a wooden coaster that have continued maintenance needs.

"We've been installing that at **Silverwood** and continue to do so," said Kilcup. "We're giving the parks the ability to do a piece at a time. These pieces kind of tie the structure together to reduce maintenance on other parts of the structure. We're listening to our customers."

Tom Rebbie, president of **Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters Inc.**, reported the company was busy. "We're busier than last year, and last year was a pretty good year." He says PTCI is contractually busy through the end of 2024.

Rebbie is finding that parks are turning to PTCI as a maintenance solution when they have struggled to get staffing post-pandemic, and he feels that his company can do the work at a much-reduced cost as compared to the park doing it, with a faster, more efficient process.

"Testing is a big part of it too," said **Janine Matscherz**, administration. "We're going to make sure it is NDT tested, where parks would have to bring their own testing services in, and they're stuck with that scheduling. It's an all-inclusive service."

The award-winning wooden track solution from The Gravity Group caught people's attention. AT/TIM BALDWIN

A new build is being provided to a nondisclosed park.

Mack Rides found optimism in America. With current events in Europe, CEO **Christian Elverfeldt** said, "It will be good for us to go back to Europe with this optimism and very, very good discussions and meetings. I'm quite confident."

Currently, the company is full through 2024.

"The big chains want to know what's new in our product portfolio," said **Max Röser**, marketing. "We wanted to shift a little into the FEC market, so we brought a small, four-seater, motion base with a VR system with a really good price tag. This is good for smaller locations, and there was quite some interest."

"We're a big company," added Elverfeldt. "We can live without such products. But with the group, we have big advantages now. We have Mack Animation; we have VR Coaster — all these synergies bring such interesting products. We have film ready to go."

Big interest was seen for the Rocking Boat concept, with the first project underway.

Mack created omni-moving cars for the Eatrenaline dining concept at **Europa-Park**, where guests move from room to room with each course.

"We're excited to scale it up for a dark ride and bring interactivity to it," said Röser.

2024 projects include a launched coaster going to Vietnam, a hypercoaster with inversions in the U.K., and a huge Big Dipper model in Europa-Park.

Preston Perkes of **S&S Sansei** found the show to be remarkable. "We've had meeting after meeting with great customers with whom we've been having conversations over the past months and years and some new conversations."

The Axis coaster was a dramatic new concept that was released just prior to the pandemic. "Axis is rebuilding," said Perkes. "They're serious now. They recognize the uniqueness of it. It's marinated." S&S has now contracted two. One will be launched, and one will use a lift.

Parks looking for more immediate attractions still seek the 4D Free Spins and drop towers. But many customers are looking at 2025 with S&S — and all the way to 2029.

Maurer Rides has enhanced its Spike Coaster System to take it to the next level. Spike Fun increases capacity with longer trains and puts some control in the hands of the rider by incorporating a button into the seat that causes the rider to lean back.

"They're all controllable. It's like doing a wheelie," said **Steve Boney**, North American sales.

A new Class V restraint now allows the system to do inversions. That can be done with an overhead lap restraint or just a locking belt system. Maurer sees the potential of dispatching every 30 seconds.

While Maurer has a layout designed, featuring an iconic element called the Omega Loop, the powered system allows the custom-

The model of Skyline Attraction's Trail Runner was one of the most impressive on the tradeshow floor. AT/TIM BALDWIN

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er to do anything. Audio and lighting also accent the attraction.

"In the future, they could add on more track, because it isn't dependent on gravity," said Boney. "The customization is beyond anything else I've seen out there."

Maurer has continued to develop the Spike Coaster for more cruise ships. A fourth ship is in discussion.

Sally Rides introduced Haunted Hotel, which is headed to **Funtown Splashtown**. An engaging animatronic graced passersby.

The ride will make use of an existing building and feature 14 scenes, including queue. The ride will feature at least nine animatronics. [See more detailed coverage in *AT*'s next issue.]

Sally said it had projects in development for 2024, 2025 and even 2026.

"Dark rides aren't always ground-based transportation systems," teased **Lauren Weaver**, marketing. "We have larger-than-life things coming. You can transport people many different ways."

Mark Beumers, CEO of **Lagotronics**, said, "We noticed in the last couple of months people were asking for quotations. We did do a development of a new interactive system during COVID, which was a fourth-generation interactive."

A new passenger-controlled plane ride at the Rides 4 U space enticed a consistent flow of riders. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

We offer customized solutions, so we don't have a lot of off-the-shelf product," added **Tom Bouwens**, sales manager. "We develop a lot on concept designs and parts of new areas."

Lagotronics worked on a large FEC project in Qatar, which was scheduled to open for the World Cup. In the Philippines, another project is happening at **Pradera Islands** where Lagotronics is supplying and partnering on four rides. One of the attractions is a car ride, where instead of shooting at aliens, the rider uses a camera to capture them. Two new attractions are headed to an undisclosed park in China in 2023.

The company's Game Changer also continues to remain popular.

Gina Guglielmi of **Intermark** found the Expo to be "rocking." Intermark represents **Fabbri**, **Gosetto** and **Preston & Barbieri**. Many attractions were sold to the carnival market from these companies, but Fabbri is supplying permanent locations with new rides. **Aztlan Parque Urbano** in Mexico City is receiving an 85-meter Giant Wheel with customized gondolas. **Cotaland** at **Circuit of the Americas**, currently under construction in Austin, will be receiving a Telecombat in which riders "shoot" at vehicles to make them lower. Gosetto is supplying a dark ride system called Treasure Hunt to **Cannery Row** in Monterey Bay, California, in partnership with Sally.

Guglielmi said **Ride Engineers of Switzerland** also had a stellar show with a first Wave Twist L as well as a Roller Ball coaster going to two European locations. A park in Germany will be receiving an 18-passenger Air Loop coaster.

Earl Heller of **Rides 4 U** confirmed the booth was very busy. As representatives for **SBF-Visa**, the booth had multiple rides on the show floor, one of which was brand new.

"All the rides [we brought] are sold," said Heller. "This is the first one ever," he said of the new ride. "It's called Enjoy The Flight. It's very popular here."

The ride puts the control in the hands of the rider. Passengers move up and down on arms and planes are capable of doing barrel rolls. Six arms seat a total of 12 passengers.

Heller says Rides 4 U enjoys a mix of customers: park operators, FEC operators and the carnival market as well. "It's probably evenly divided," he said. "That's a rough estimate though. We have a lot of walkups, and we make time for them."

He felt the spinning

Huss Park Attractions (above left) privately discussed five signature attractions with prospective park buyers. This year, Altitude Attractions added the Hammered ride to their lineup (above right). AT/DAVID FAKE, JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

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Zamperla held three press announcements on the show floor's first day; Draken Falls being supplied to Adventureland in Iowa (above left). Great Coasters International revealed the Zambezi Zinger car headed to Worlds of Fun (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN

EXPO

Continued from page 8B

coaster was still a hit for the company.

Extreme Engineering had three things it was promoting: Parkour, Flex Shade and Cloud Coaster Storm.

Flex Shade uses an epoxy resin pole to support its shade fabric. "All the loads and tension are actually in the poles, which flex much like bamboo or a palm tree. Steel doesn't," said **Phil Wilson**, chief development officer. "Our installation is less invasive to a park because you don't need all this steel structure. It keeps the costs relatively inexpensive."

Extreme Engineering has had the patented pole system previously used in a jumping attraction, but in support of shade structures, the product finds an entirely new use.

Parkour, which took a Brass Ring, is expected to debut in a park in 2023. Extreme Engineering is ready to fill orders.

"We've come up with the idea of projecting onto the experience so that you can have an interactivity that is different — the Amazon jungle or downtown Tokyo," said COO **Ron Wyatt**.

"It's immersing a person into a video game," added Wilson.

Three installations of Cloud Coaster will be installed in 2023: **Wilderness at the Smokies** (Tennessee), **Richland Chambers** (Texas), and **Sports Wenatchee** (Washington). The Tennessee version will interact with attractions below, going through different rooms. The Texas version will be the company's largest coaster to date and will be double stacked. "Wenatchee packs a mighty punch into a compact model," said Wilson.

Triotech announced an attendant-free four-player interactive simulator game. QUBE will be a coin-up simulator on a small footprint. "QUBE combines the robustness and reliability expected from a coin-operated product with an unparalleled sense of immersion," said **Ernest Yale**, CEO. Triotech has committed to developing a full library of content over the next years.

Great Coasters International, Inc. revealed the lead car for **Worlds of Fun**'s Zambezi Zinger. The new wooden coaster will feature some sections of steel Titan Track.

"The response to Titan Track has been unbelievable, fascinating, we want more, when can we get it," said **Clair Hain**, president. "All of those things are happening."

Hain said GCII will be introducing Titan Track on three other existing rides in 2023. "Possibly by spring, we will be [announcing] a completely steel ride." That project will be in Europe.

In addition, GCII has been working on the refurbishment of the wooden coaster at **Arnolds Park** in Iowa.

Zamperla, one of the largest and busiest booths, sadly suffered a loss on the third day of the Expo with the news that it had lost is founder, **Alberto Zamperla**. Still the company honored him by finishing the show with a tribute on the company's video board.

On the first day of the trade show, Zamperla had three press announcements.

"On the coaster side, we relaunched our coaster division in early '21. We spent that year telling people how we have invested and grown, and this year we have been able to translate that into sales," said **Adam Sandy**, roller coaster sales. "And then next year we're having one of our busiest years in terms of seven very different roller coasters. Clients have come back to us seeing we have invested a lot of money to become one of the premier roller coaster companies."

The Lightning vehicle was showcased and is designed to fit 95 percent of people in its height requirement. A new coaster in China will be using a four-across Lightning vehicle.

The Nebulaz ride on the show floor was to be delivered to **Canobie Lake**. During Expo week, **Kennywood** announced it would be receiving a Gryphon ride from Zamperla.

Go-go Bounce was a new children's ride on display, which was an offshoot of the company's popular Jump Around.

"It may look from the exterior as the same ride, but the internal components are completely different," said **Michael Coleman**, North American sales. "We have taken a look at the total cost of ownership of a Jump Around and decided it was time to take some modern advancements that have become available. We went through a new actuated system with an offboard air compressor. The ride is quieter, more reliable and costs less in the long run."

One of the company's reveals was Draken Falls going to **Adventureland** in Iowa. The superflume seats six passengers per boat.

"What I like about this show is that there are a lot of maintenance people here with their ownership groups," noted Coleman. "Getting into the conversation of what's different on the inside with the maintenance team is that it automatically registers."

—Addtional reporting by David Fake

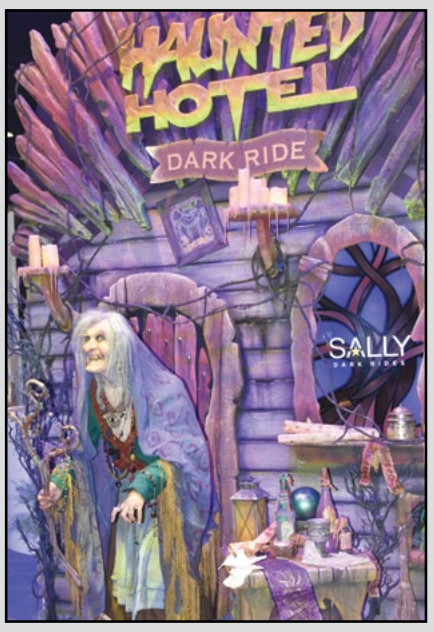
Technical Park showcased its Sidecar XL model flatride which debuted at Playland Park in Rye, New York. AT/DAVID FAKE

One of the first events of the IAAPA Expo week was the Charity Motorcycle Ride in support of Give Kids The World Village. Nearly three dozen riders spent Sunday, November 13, riding through the stellar Central Orlando scenery together. COURTESY IAAPA

The annual IAAPA Brass Ring Awards celebrated innovations, marketing, exhibits and more from around the industry. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Triotech encouraged attendees to become part of the company's exhibit by signing its "burst" at the front of its display.
AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

At the NRCMA booth, Chip Cleary of Europa-Park delivered a nice piece of signage to go along with the park's recent donation of a EuroSat car. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



Sally Dark Rides had an animatronic figure from Funtown Splashtown's forthcoming Haunted Hotel dark ride on display.
AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Presented live on the trade show floor, the EDUTalk Stage offered 15-minute sessions featuring speakers who offered tips, tricks and insights on topics such as professional development, sustainability, safety, technology and the guest experience.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

The openness of B&M's new surf coaster vehicle was was on display. The vehicle will be utilized on the new Pipeline coaster coming to SeaWorld Orlando in 2023.
AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

Rocky Mountain Construction representatives were proud to display the lead car for their forthcoming Wildcat's Revenge coaster at Hersheypark.
AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

IAAPA 2022

Water park industry show signs it continues to rebound in 2022

AT: *Jeffrey Seifert*
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ProSlide had a model of the largest Rally Racer to date, currently under construction at Europa-Park's Rulantica water park in Germany. AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

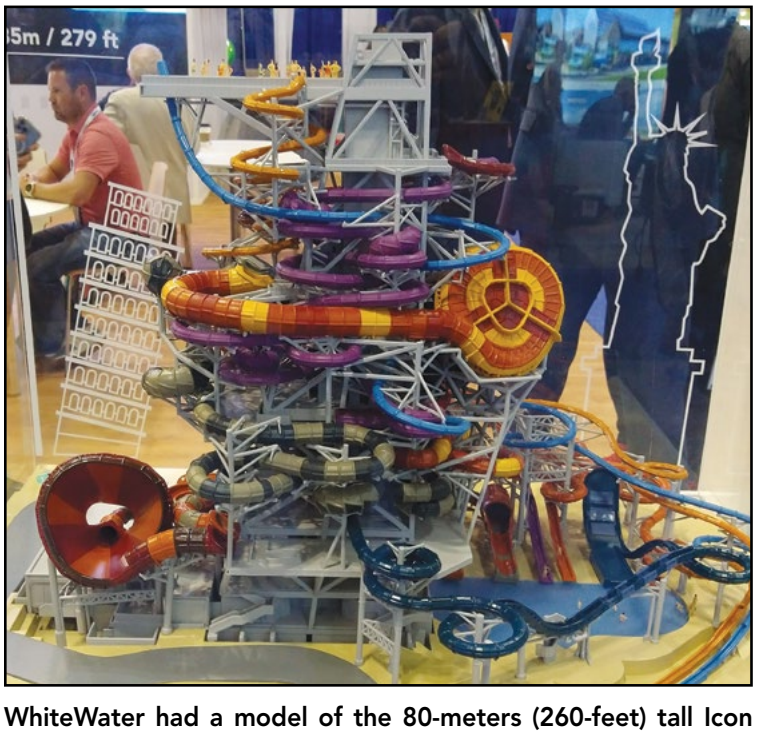
ORLANDO — The water attractions industry seems to have rebounded well following the effects of the 2020 global pandemic. Vigorous growth took place this past year as indoor and outdoor water parks that were delayed or put on hold continue to open at an impressive rate, in both the private and public sector.

Suppliers continue to provide innovation in order to expand attractions offerings and keep the industry new and fresh. *AT* takes a look at some of the highlights of what the industry is doing to create new experiences that keep guests coming back for more. The creativity continues and expanded attractions offerings still keep the industry thriving.

ProSlide Technology Inc. had a stellar season with a record number of water rides opening in 2022. By the end of the summer, ProSlide had completed nearly 230 rides all around the world. Some of the recent highlights include the world's first dueling flying saucer at **Adventure Island** water park adjacent to **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay**. **Splashway Waterpark and Campground** in Sheridan, Texas, opened Patriot, a new slide that uses face-to-face seating in a specially designed raft. ProSlide garnered a Brass Ring Award for Switchback in the water park ride attraction $2 million or less category.

Multiple projects are already in the works for 2023 including a massive eight-lane racing slide headed for **Europa-Park's Rulantica Water Park** in Germany. It will be the largest rally racer to date.

WhiteWater West also had a strong year with several projects opening in 2022 including the The Edge at **Soaky Mountain Waterpark** in Sevierville, Tennessee. That new ride, a Blasterango Battle which also included the use of clear fiberglass technology, gave WhiteWater a first-place Brass Ring Award for a water park ride attraction costing $2 million or more. For 2023 WhiteWater is introducing a variation of the Boomerango, the Boomerango Squeeze, which allows the Boomerango element — previously located at the end of the slide — to be placed anywhere on the ride. Instead of the usual runout, the slide channel narrows, allowing the raft to continue onto a slide section potentially leading to other elements.



WhiteWater had a model of the 80-meters (260-feet) tall Icon tower at Meryal Water Park in Qatar. The tower supports 20 tons of fiberglass that comprise the 12 high-profile tube and body slides. It is scheduled to open early 2023. AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

WhiteWater had also just completed a massive, multi-year project at **Meryal Water Park** on Qetaifan Island North in Qatar. In addition to breaking a world record for the tallest waterslide, the Icon Tower features the most water slides on a single tower. Other attractions include a SlideWheel rotating waterslide, racing waterslide, and a Master Blaster water coaster.

Other new products introduced for 2023 include Walhalla, a six-person raft slide that is a fusion between the weightless sensations of Boomerango and the yo-yo-like oscillations of Manta.

Aquatic Development Group (ADG) continues to be excited about its EpicSurf product. EpicSurf produces a real wave of water with a depth that can be adjusted from three to six feet for a more authentic surfing experience. The deep-water wave allows the rider to use an assortment of boards while surfing, including a full-size surfboard with fins (or skegs) instead of a modified flowboard. **Julie Kline**, marketing manager at Aquatic Development Group, told *AT* she hopes to be able to announce a project involving Epic Surf at the beginning of the year.

During a press conference ADG showed a video of how EpicSurf was being made available to those with disabilities to provide recreation and a variety of rehabilitation therapies.

Projects that ADG has in the works include a recreation pool, wave pool and tidal river for Meridiana, a planned community in Manvel, Texas just outside of Houston.

A major expansion is in the works at the **Wilderness at the Smokies Waterpark Resort and Family Adventure Center** in Sevierville, Tennessee.

ADG is also working on a couple of water parks for existing and/or new RV campground parks.

OpenAire, Inc. of Oakville, Ontario, recently completed a project for **OWA Parks and Resorts** in Foley, Alabama for a new indoor water park. The structure — the largest of its kind on the Gulf Coast features a 128-foot wide by 26-foot tall retractable wall that opens to the adjacent outdoor water park, allowing guests to move seamlessly between the indoor and outdoor sections of the park.

Projects in the works for 2023 include a glass structure housing a water park for the **Showboat Hotel** in Atlantic City, New Jersey. In addition to the retractable roof, the more-than-550-foot-long enclosure will include large sliding doors that open to the boardwalk.

Polin Waterparks was finishing off a successful year with projects all around the globe.

Among the largest was a major expansion to Vietnam's **Tropical Paradise** located in Nha Trang City. New features in that park included Naja — a redesign of the popular King Cobra slide along with its latest Extraventure Course. What sets this playground/splash course apart from others is that once the park-goer successfully completes the ropes course they have access to a slide tower that leads to a unique Aquatube slide just for them.

Polin was also touting its new Rift attraction — a visually stunning waterslide that features what appears to be a 360-degree vertical loop standing nearly 10.8 meters (35.5 feet) tall. Thrill seekers do not, however, negotiate a vertical loop. Instead, riders aboard a single-person tube enter the loop from the side, then rock back and forth like they would in a halfpipe.

One of the latest themed slides offered by Polin is Cosmos, which capitalizes on the popular space theme. Guests board rafts and embark on a journey through dark enclosed tubes with translucent stars for an out-of-this world visual then enter space-shuttle-shaped pods where they will oscillate

See WATER, page 13B

WATER

Continued from page 12B

back and forth before continuing into a surprise spiral drop to the finale. Polin took home a second-place Brass Ring Award for best new product concept for a major ride or water park ride.

Wibit Sports was on hand again with its line of inflatable floating obstacle/play courses. This year Wibit had on display its new Wibit Peakz floating modules that rise one, two or three meters above the water surface. Connected by narrow bridges and walkways, Wibit Peakz tests balance, agility and speed as guests traverse the elevated Wibit course.

Wibit Peakz was awarded a first-place Brass Ring Award for best new product concept for a major ride or water park ride.

Like all Wibit courses, the design is modular and can be set up with as many devices as a facility desires. To make things easier, Wibit offers a package with either 7, 10, 14 or 18 obstacles. The course can stand on its own, or be attached to any of the existing Wibit courses. Like all Wibit products, Wibit Peakz is suitable for installation in any type of water — freshwater, saltwater or chlorinated.

Vortex Aquatic Structures International's forte is its splashpads, aquatic play structures and architectural displays for city parks, hotels, resorts, shopping centers and commercial spaces. However, Vortex was back with an improved version of Dream Tunnel — an immersive aquatic attraction that uses water screens, mists, lasers, lights and audio to create a dream-like world. The tunnel can be experienced as a walk-through or float-through attraction and interchangeable dreamscape experiences can keep guests coming back for more.

Surf Parks are materializing all over the world and ADG has made great strides in stationary wave surfing with its Epic Surf that produces an actual deep-water wave (above left). Polin's latest space-themed attraction is Cosmos which has thrill seekers sliding through star fields and space pods (above right). AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

A fully functional Dream Tunnel was on display, and much like last year, generated long lines of curious visitors seeking to experience the illusory environment. This year, the Dream Tunnel was bestowed the first-place Brass Ring Award for water park ride attraction with a cost of $2 million or less.

Although **Wiegand. Waterrides**, made a name for itself with its stainless steel slides that seem to have an unlimited lifespan, the company is gaining notoriety with its fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP) slides. Wiegand's four-passenger raft fusion slide combining a big bang and lotus element was awarded a second-place Brass Ring Award for water park ride/attraction costing more than $2 million. A version of this slide opened in July 2022 at **Ocean Adventure** in Cheonan, South Korea. It was the largest slide the company had built to date.

Wiegand was also exhibiting its newest Wie-Glow innovation that has the ability to put a variety of images inside a slide that can be illuminated with economical ultraviolet LEDs. Unlike the repetitive patterns and designs we currently see, these images can be different throughout the entire slide and actually tell a story as the rider progresses down the tube.

SplashTacular's FlyTyme slide continues to be popular. The simple-looking slide has an upward curve at the end, which then launches the rider into the air before splashing down in a pool. In addition to providing the thrill of flying through the air, the FlyTyme slide has the added advantage of not requiring a run-out or any contact with the landing pool. The slides can be placed at the side of an existing diving pool or deep water section of a lap pool. When not in use the slides do not interfere with the existing pool. When competition or lap swimming is not taking place, operation of the slide can resume by simply turning the flow back on.

Splashtacular is the largest U.S.-based waterslide supplier. Headquartered in Kansas, the company offers a complete turnkey product including design, engineering, manufacturing and installation with everything made in America. Although its primary client base is municipal, hotel, resort, and private water parks, the company has experience with larger clients as well, including Six Flags and ProParks.

AquaBanas has a complete line of inflatable floating or land-based cabanas that are extremely popular with the yachting community. AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

Scotland-based **Murphy's Waves** known throughout the world for its high-quality wave generation equipment, had several high-profile projects the last few years including the **Grand Country Resort** in Branson, Missouri. The pool uses the new Breaker wave generator and is capable of generating a range of wave patterns, up to four feet high, throughout the 4,300-square-foot pool.

Empex Watertoys newest line of water play toys is the Aquadinos collection featuring an array of friendly, adorable and entertaining dinosaurs for young families.

Empex has being doing water toys for more than 30 years and has developed its own special fiberglass and plastic formulations that are designed specifically to last in aquatic environments.

AquaBanas had on display several of its inflatable floating cabanas. The company, which started in 2009 with an inflatable slide for mega-yachts, has a full line of floating and land-based vinyl inflatable cabanas. The floating cabanas can be used in all kinds of water, from large pools to lakes, to ocean beaches. A variety of sizes and designs range from two-seat loungers to 12-person party picnic banas. Once inflated, some models come complete with built-in seats, cup holders, tables and a roof covering.

Raft and tube suppliers, **CPI**, **Zebec** and **ZPro** continue to supply the water park industry with the inflatable products and mats needed to partake in many of the new and exciting attractions the slide manufactures continue to churn out. All three have also branched out to the amusement industry providing floatation collars for river raft rides as well as bumper car collars.

Martin Aquatic Design & Engineering, which just started exhibiting at last year's IAAPA Expo, was back again with an even larger booth. The company has worked on more than 2,500 projects since 1987 and has a number of projects in the works for 2023 and beyond.

Among **Water Technology Incorporated**'s (WTI) project portfolio are several high-profile projects including **Kalahari Round Rock** (Texas), **Aqua Nick Riviera Maya** (Mexico) and **Ocean Park Water World** (Hong Kong), with the latter being awarded the 2022 World Waterpark Association's Leading Edge Award.

The water attractions industry has been resilient. While 2021 showed promising recovery, 2022 exhibited remarkable growth with massive new projects and some companies reporting record-breaking profits. All indications are that 2023 looks to be even better as the growth trend continues

IAAPA 2022

Mobile ride, equipment suppliers have busy IAAPA Expo 2022

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ORLANDO — Among the hundreds of exhibitors at IAAPA Expo 2022 are suppliers of equipment and rides for not only the park industry but also for the outdoor mobile or carnival industry.

The following are some of those companies and the products they sold during the 2022 IAAPA event.

It was a busy show for Nashville, Tennessee-based **Intermark Ride Group** and its owner **Gina Guglielmi.**

Guglielmi represents several foreign ride manufacturers and sells an array of used rides.

Reporting at the end of the show, she said that the Italian manufacturer **Preston and Barbieri** sold two, 48-seat family swing rides. One went to **North American Midway Entertainment (N.A.M.E.),** headquartered in Farmland, Indiana. That carnival was expecting to receive the ride in 2023.

The other swing ride was purchased by Deggeller Attractions headquartered in Palm City, Florida.

In addition, Preston and Barbieri sold a state-fair-type slide to **Todd Armstrong** and **Jason Wagoner,** owners of **Amusement Midway Providers Inc.** There are LEDs on the slide lanes, as well as images incorporated into the lanes. The slide also comes with a large, programmable video monitors at the top.

Guglielmi also represents Italian manufacturer **Gosetto**. This company sold a two-story funhouse to **Cole Shows Amusements**, Covington, Virginia, and another to **Fiesta Shows** headquartered in Seabrook, New Hampshire.

For Chris Kudler, left, and his dad, Vince Kudler, owners, Majestic Rides, the rebound from the pandemic has been wonderful with the two keeping very busy during IAAPA Expo 2022 (above left). Len Soled of Rides 4-U (above right) was hard to catch at the IAAPA Expo, enjoying a "big show" with all segments of the industry looking and ready to buy. AT/PAM SHERBORNE

Fabbri Group, Italy, sold a 40-seat Corsair ride, which is a pirate ship-type ride, to **Jolly Shows** based in Annapolis, Maryland. That carnival is expected to take delivery of the ride in 2023.

Fabbri also sold a 40-meter, eight-seat Booster to **Talley Amusements**, Fort Worth, Texas.

Len Soled, Rides 4-U, Somerville, New Jersey, was hard to catch up with at the 2022 IAAPA Expo. But, after finally doing so, he reported being extremely happy with the show.

"We had a big show with all segments of the industry being interested in our products," Soled said. "I have spoken with people from carnivals, parks and family entertainment centers. They have all been here."

Soled represents ride manufacturers **KMG**, **SBF/Visa** and **S&S Worldwide.** He also brokers sales for used rides and works with auctions and liquidations.

Soled didn't have much time to gear up for the 2022 IAAPA Expo as numerous sales were being finalized. Some of those included an SBF/Visa Group spinning coaster sold to **Tweetsie Railroad**, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, and an SBF/Visa trailer-mounted Mini Reverse Time sold to **Powers Great American Midways,** Corfu, New York.

Funland of Fredericksburg, Virginia, purchased an SBF/Visa Drop Tower and he had a SBF/Visa Barrel of Fun going to El Salvador.

During the IAAPA Expo, **Malibu Jack's** purchased a Drop Tower, Spinning Coaster and a Mini Reverse Time, all from SBF/Visa.

Santa's Village Family Amusement Park in Dundee, Illinois, bought an SBF/Visa's Pirate Ship and Spinning Coaster. **Land of Make Believe** in Hope, New Jersey, also purchased a Pirate Ship.

Soled said before the IAAPA show, **Powers and Thomas Midway Entertainment,** headquartered in Wilmington, North Carolina, had already taken delivery of its new KMG Freak Out. In fact, a post of Powers and Thomas Entertainment Facebook page stated they took delivery of the ride the second week of November.

Blue Star Amusements, West Paterson, New Jersey, purchased a new KMG Freak Out at the show.

"We are going back with a lot of interest," Soled said. "We still have some capacity into late 2023."

Vince Kudler, Majestic Rides, New Waterford, Ohio, said when the COVID pandemic hit, it was like turning off a light switch.

"But it has rebounded in

See MOBILE, page 15B

Audio Innovators based in Riverview, Florida, offers an array of audio message repeaters, two-way radio needs, among other products. From left are Zack Hershberger, Dale Hershberger, and Debra Green of Casey's Rides Inc. AT/PAM SHERBORNE

This Preston and Barbieri slide (above left) is similar to the slide purchased by Amusement Midway Providers Inc. at the IAAPA Expo 2022. Jim Frederiksen of Frederiksen Industries (above middle) said he was going home from the IAAPA Expo with a dozen good potential sales. In the above right image, Tim Noland (right) and Kevin Birdsell of Eli Bridge enjoy a rare moment of pause during November's IAAPA Expo 2022. COURTESY PRESTON AND BARBIERI; AT/PAM SHERBORNE

Bob's Space Racers, Holly Hill, Florida, exhibited an array of its classics but with a new twist, they are attendant-free.
AT/PAM SHERBORNE

MOBILE

Continued from page 14B

a positive way," Kudler said. "We are sold out for 2023 and are taking orders for 2024."

Kudler said he is seeing business in all aspects of the industry, carnival, parks and family entertainment centers.

Tim Noland of **Eli Bridge,** Jacksonville, Illinois, has begun to notice a trend among venues that offer such activities as mazes, petting zoos and hay rides are starting to purchase rides as well. He lately sold a brand new Eli Scrambler to such a business and he is working on selling another scrambler to another operator.

The company also continues to provide its wheels to **Scheels** locations throughout the country. Scheels is a retail store that offers sporting goods, clothing, hunting and fishing gear and more. Noland said they received an order for two more during the summer.

Jim Frederiksen, Frederiksen Industries, Tampa, Florida, said he was going home with a dozen good potential sales.

"I've had the best year in 2022 that I have had out of my 35 years in business," he said.

Bob's Space Racers' Larry Steele said that company, located in Holly Hill, Florida, was showcasing an array of the classics but with a new twist, they are attendant-free.

"We are trying to ease the lack of the work force by creating more attendant-free games," Steele said.

Bob Space Racers was exhibiting four of the 12 different attendant-free game models they now have available. The games are manufactured so they can be fitted together.

The company showcased attendant-free classics such as the Bowler Roller, Balloon Bust, Roll Down Add'em Up and Bazooka Blast.

Other attendant-free games available included Strike Zone II, Basketball, Cat Rack, Roll-A-Ball Family Entertainment Center (FEC) game and Whopper Water FEC game.

"We have had a lot of foot traffic and a lot of interest at the show," Steele said.

Marilee Gray, Kay Park Recreation, said they had picked up several orders and a lot of interest during the IAAPA Expo.

She is seeing a lot of popularity in the company's outdoor, weather resistant **Ping Pong** tables.

Hunter Novotny, left, and his father, Jeff Novotny, Larson International, were having a great IAAPA Expo. The company was sporting a new booth while celebrating its 40th anniversary.
AT/PAM SHERBORNE

IAAPA Hall of Fame Inductees recognize visionaries, innovators

ORLANDO — The **IAAPA** Expo 2022 saw four new inductees added to the IAAPA Hall of Fame. This year's inductees represent decades of innovation and evolution that have shaped the industry across a number of brands and sectors.

This year's honorees are:

Joan Ganz Cooney, a pioneer in edutainment, has greatly and directly influenced theme parks from **Sesame Place** to **KidZania** and **LEGOLAND**. Her influence is seen in the interactive exhibits at museums and zoos, education-based programming incorporated into attractions, and even in FECs. Her passion for children, education, and entertainment and her idea to utilize entertainment as an educational conduit was the catalyst for the foundation of the Children's Television Workshop.

Xavier Lopez Ancona, the driving force behind **KidZania**, a role-playing edutainment concept operating in 15 countries, took the simple idea of child role-playing and turned it into a major, heavily invested and extremely innovative attractions located in retail malls. The concept took a completely new approach to children's attractions, allowing them to play as adults in a city built to their scale. He brought his business and consulting experience to the concept and thought outside of industry norms and created links to business and sponsors that underpin the business model and drive KidZania's success.

Darrell Metzger has bridged more than four decades of working in the amusement industry and built a successful, global track record in the development, operation and revival of leisure/resort/residential communities and attractions. He has successfully positioned and repositioned major destinations, theme parks and resorts on a global scale. Metzger's professional highlights include **Disneyland Resort**, California; **Tokyo Disney Resort**, Tokyo; **Ocean Park Resort**, Hong Kong; **Atlantis Adventures**, Hawaii; **Sentosa Island Resort**, Singapore; and **Legoland** Resort, Malaysia.

Dennis Speigel has been impacting the amusement and leisure industry for more than 60 years. His passion for the industry began as a 13-year-old ticket taker at the now defunct **Coney Island Amusement Park** in Cincinnati in 1959. He has traveled the world advising and consulting investors, bankers, developers, students, enthusiasts, researchers, suppliers, and buyers. Speigel has long been regarded the "go to" guy when an opinion or the most updated information is being sought. His professional highlights include **Kings Island**, Ohio; **Taft Broadcasting**, Virginia; and founding **International Theme Park Services**.

"We could not be more thrilled with this year's Hall of Fame inductees," said **Michael Collins**, chairman of the IAAPA Hall of Fame and Archives Committee and senior partner with **Leisure Development Partners LLP**. "These four individuals truly represent more than 100 years of influence and imagination that has resonated throughout our industry."

Established in 1990, the IAAPA Hall of Fame and Archives Committee selects inductees from nominations received online suggesting amusement industry professionals who have proven to be extraordinary pioneers in the industry and have seen their personal dreams through to completion not for their own success, but for the growth and betterment of the entire industry.

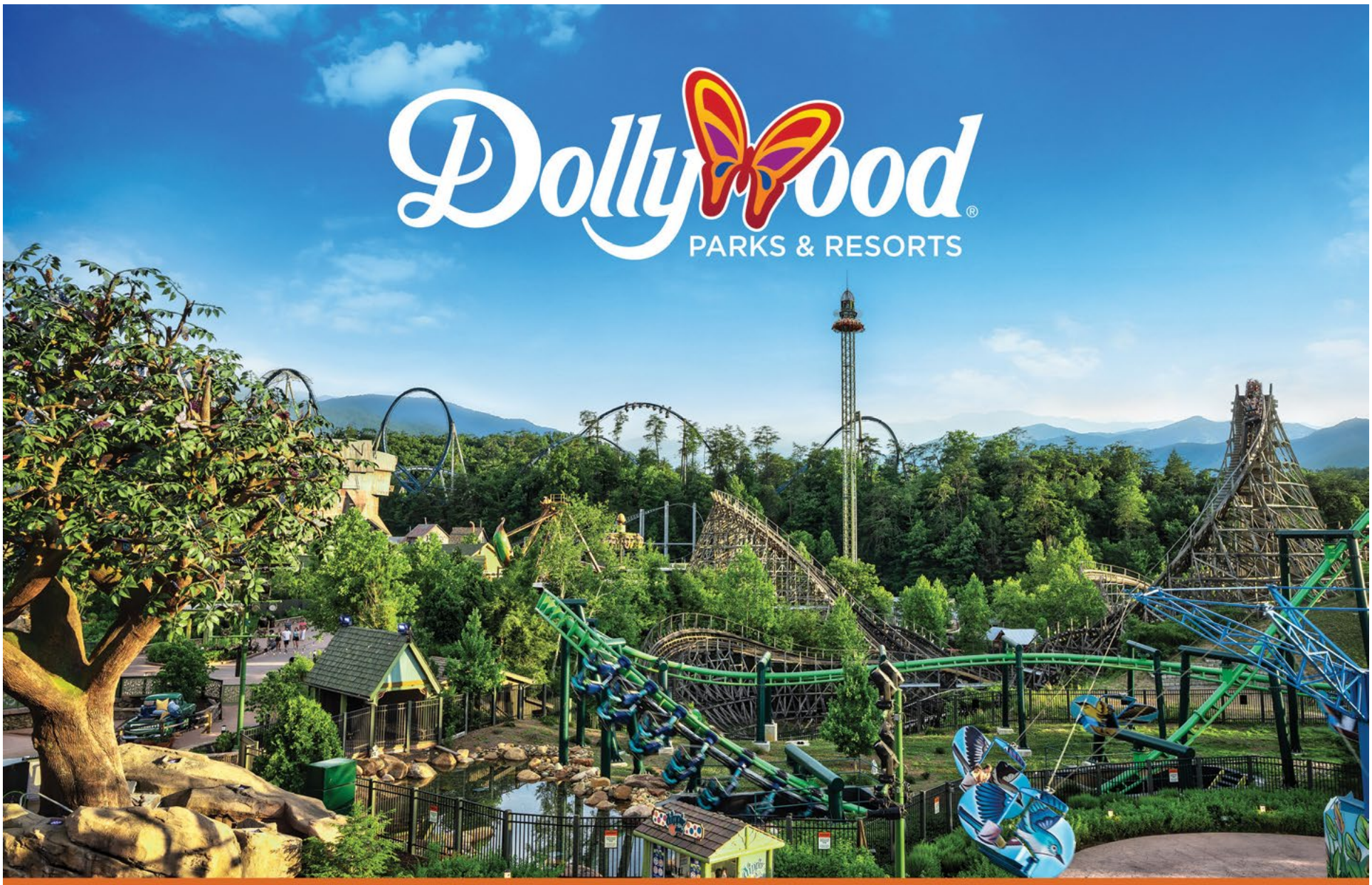
—David Fake

Joan Ganz Cooney

Xavier Lopez Ancona

Darrell Metzger

Dennis Speigel



SEE YOU SEPTEMBER 8 - 9 AT DOLLYWOOD FOR THE 2023 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS

SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

The dangers of shallow water — page 36 / LJM Safety under new ownership — page 50

Funtown Splashtown's tower gets a color update by Baynum

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
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SACO, Maine — As time drew near to repaint **Funtown Splashtown's** Dragon Descent ride, the Cormier family got together and began looking at what color scheme they would like to see on the tower that stands 210 feet tall.

"Since we are a family-owned-and-operated park, we like to get the family's opinions," **Cory Cormier** said. "The tower was due for a paint job and we wanted to do something fun."

Baynum Solutions, Newport, Kentucky, had been selected for the job.

After 10 days of negotiating, the family had a decision. The **S&S Worldwide** Turbo Drop tower, with an accelerated drop, went from a white tower with a yellow and red interior to a four-color scheme.

"It is sort of a purple-red color at the top, a lime green in the middle and blue at the bottom," Cormier said. "It has a yellow interior."

Baynum went to work once the decision was made. According to **Melissa Bamford**, director, marketing, Baynum Solutions, it took just under three weeks to clean, prepare, fully prime and fully repaint the ride structure and internal cylinders.

But, Bamford stressed, three weeks of work on the ride might make it sound like a cinch, but like anything 210 up in the air, there are always caveats.

FAST FACTS

Completed by Baynum Solutions

•

Ride is an S&S Turbo Drop

•

Tower is 210 feet tall

•

Used 50 gallons of paint

•

Over 4,000 square-feet of plastic tarping used to protect the grounds

•

Entire job took three weeks to complete

"This project, due to its height, does not allow for lift accessibility, which called for creativity in gaining access to the top," Bamford said. "Along with the park maintenance team and under strict safety guidelines, we called on the use of the ride's passenger carrier as our 'elevator' to the top and meticulously worked all the way back to the ground.

"We then relied on the skill and experience of our team to rig and climb areas outside the carrier's reach," she said. "Phew, talk about fearlessly tackling a job."

In addition, because of Baynum's technique of hand-brushing and rolling, there are hazards of paint drift when applying it at such heights.

"So we used over 4,000 square-feet of plastic tarping to protect the surrounding grounds around the ride envelope," Bamford said.

Above left is a look of Funtown Splashtown's Dragon Descent before Baynum Solutions' work. The newly repainted Dragon Descent stands out at night (above left).
COURTESY FUNTOWN SPLASHTOWN

"With 50 gallons of paint and under direction of the park, we used the power of color to take the existing all-white structure to a new beautifully-bold, four-color-scheme standout."

Funtown Splashtown park officials are excited about the repainted tower, which Baynum completed in October.

"It is completely different," Cormier said. "And, at night, it really shows up."

In addition to the newly repainted Dragon Descent, Cormier said they are currently working on installing a new dark ride manufactured by **Sally Corporation** out of Jacksonville, Florida.

Park officials look forward to offering a refreshed tower and a new dark ride when the park opens back up in May for the 2023 season.

Off-season maintenance and refurbishments are standard for Funtown Splashtown, which began as a drive-in food stand in 1960 on U.S. Route 1 in Saco, Maine. The park is home to 50 rides, water slides, pools, various games and food.

Cormier said next on Funtown Splashtown's list to be repainted is the park's Wild Mouse roller coaster. He hopes they will get that done next year.

Baynum continues to be

See TOWER, page 34

Extreme Engineering's Flex Shade wins Brass Ring

ATHENS, Texas — Extreme Engineering's Flex Shade can create shade practically anywhere. During IAAPA Expo 2022, the system was awarded the Brass Ring for Best Service & Equipment. The Flex Shade system can easily be installed without requiring massive pilings or infrastructure for installation. The company's innovative, post installation methods allow the Flex Shade to be an easy addition to any application. Flush mount installation methods are also available, which also don't require deep pilings. The flex poles can be easily removed and stored away during the off-season. Using as little as six inches of concrete, Flex Shade can be installed above concrete surfaces and will not block sight lines of theming, facades, or area landscaping. It is rated to withstand up to 160 miles per hour winds. COURTESY EXTREME ENGINEERING

TOWER

Continued from page 33

busy. Bamford said, in mid-December, "We are fortunate to have views of three coastlines in the coming year."

"We are just wrapping up some annual maintenance on The Great Nor-Easter and Wheel at **Morey's Piers,** Wildwood, New Jersey," she said.

The Great Nor-Easter is a steel inverted roller coaster, a Suspended Looping Coaster model manufactured by the Dutch company **Vekoma.** The park's Giant Wheel is also a Vekoma ride.

For the third time in its nearly 100-year existence, Bamford said Baynum had the pleasure of completely restoring the Giant Dipper wooden roller coaster at **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk,** Santa Cruz, California. The Giant Dipper was originally built in 1924, is 70 feet tall and has a maximum speed of 55 mph.

"And after the first of the year, we'll kick off some coating projects at **Galveston's Pleasure Pier** in Galveston, Texas," she said.

And that is just the beginning for the company. Baynum has more than 100 restorative amusement park projects across the U.S. in the coming months.

"All in time for opening day," she said.

Baynum Solutions' owner **Chris Baynum** actually began in the painting business with a background in residential painting. He took on his first roller coaster project in the early 1980s: repainting The Beast at **Kings Island**, Mason, Ohio.

Since then, Baynum has taken on and completed hundreds of major ride projects around the world. The company can provide painting and related services to amusement and water parks of all sizes, working closely with park owners, operators, ride manufacturers and maintenance teams.

•baynumpainting.com

The newly repainted 210-foot S&S Turbo Drop tower, Dragon Descent, project was completed in October by Newport, Kentucky's Baynum Solutions. COURTESY BAYNUM SOLUTIONS

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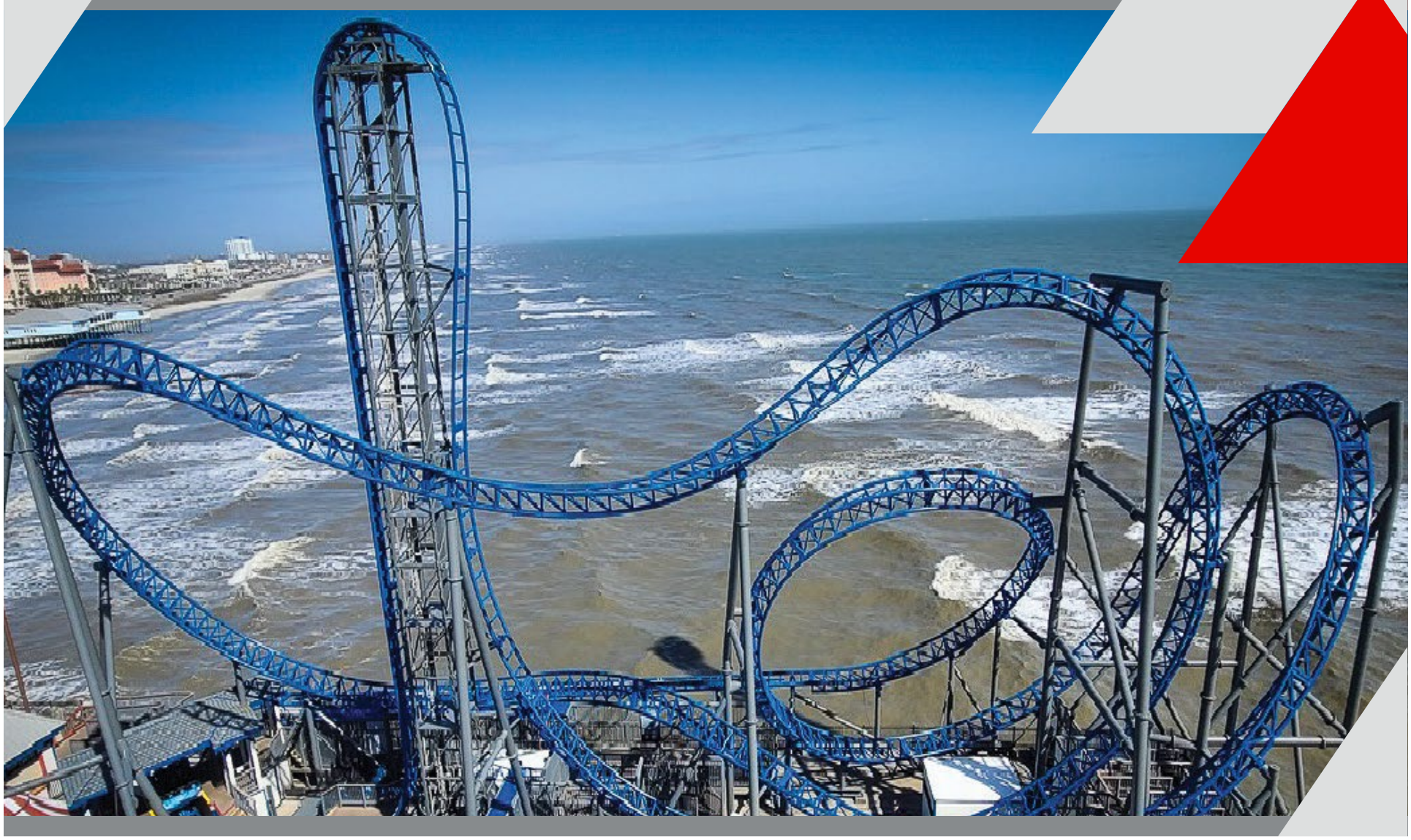

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Looking deeper at dangers of shallow water, what to be mindful of

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

LAS VEGAS — At the recent tradeshow provided by **World Waterpark Association**, many seminars provided thought-provoking and relevant information. *Amusement Today* was in attendance at a presentation titled "The Dangers of Shallow Water" and followed up on the topic.

Wess Long is president of **StarGuard Elite** and has seen firsthand the potential for unexpected accidents. StarGuard Elite oversees lifeguard services to more than 300 clients worldwide, both private and public, including management, attraction attendants, training, certification and more.

Lifeguards have the challenge of determining what is playing and what is struggling. Children and parents should know the appropriate depth of water for a child's height.
AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY STARGUARD ELITE

"If you go back 20 years in a lot of water parks, there were a lot of deep-water attractions, and that's where a majority of rescues were happening," Long said. "There were fatal and critical incidents occurring in deep water. But over the last decade or two, there's been a progression to shallow water. Wave pools will get to six feet and stop, and some of them don't even get to that."

Those changes — with newer pools — could be the result of deeper water in wave pools not being utilized when swimmers weren't feeling strong enough to be there, plus it is a cost savings from an operational standpoint.

"The thought process of owners, developers and designers is that 'It's safer.' The challenge is that most water parks are catering to families — and families with young children," said Long. "In 2019 there were several critical and fatal incidents in our industry. Looking back, they occurred in what an adult would consider shallow water. Operators will tell you that they know that children are at risk in any depth of water, however, there is that mindset that it isn't prevalent or their first thought."

Long has noticed at many facilities he has visited that deeper water received far more attention than shallow water, and that concerns him. He wishes to raise the level of awareness.

"You have to take yourself out of an adult mindset and think about yourself as children," he noted. "Too often that is easy to say. But if you think about it, three feet of water, three and a half feet of water and four feet of water … what the science shows is you have a five-to-seven-year age gap between who can safely stand in three feet of water and who can safely stand in four feet of water. Too often we treat it as just the same. At five years old, children can typically stand in three feet of water with their mouth and nose above the water, but it is beyond that when the need to be a proficient swimmer becomes much more important. One of the things that bothered me in the industry is that

▸ **See SHALLOW, page 38**

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SHALLOW

Continued from page 36

a lot of the safety certifications out there had shallow water/deep water classifications: under five feet was shallow water and above five feet was deep water."

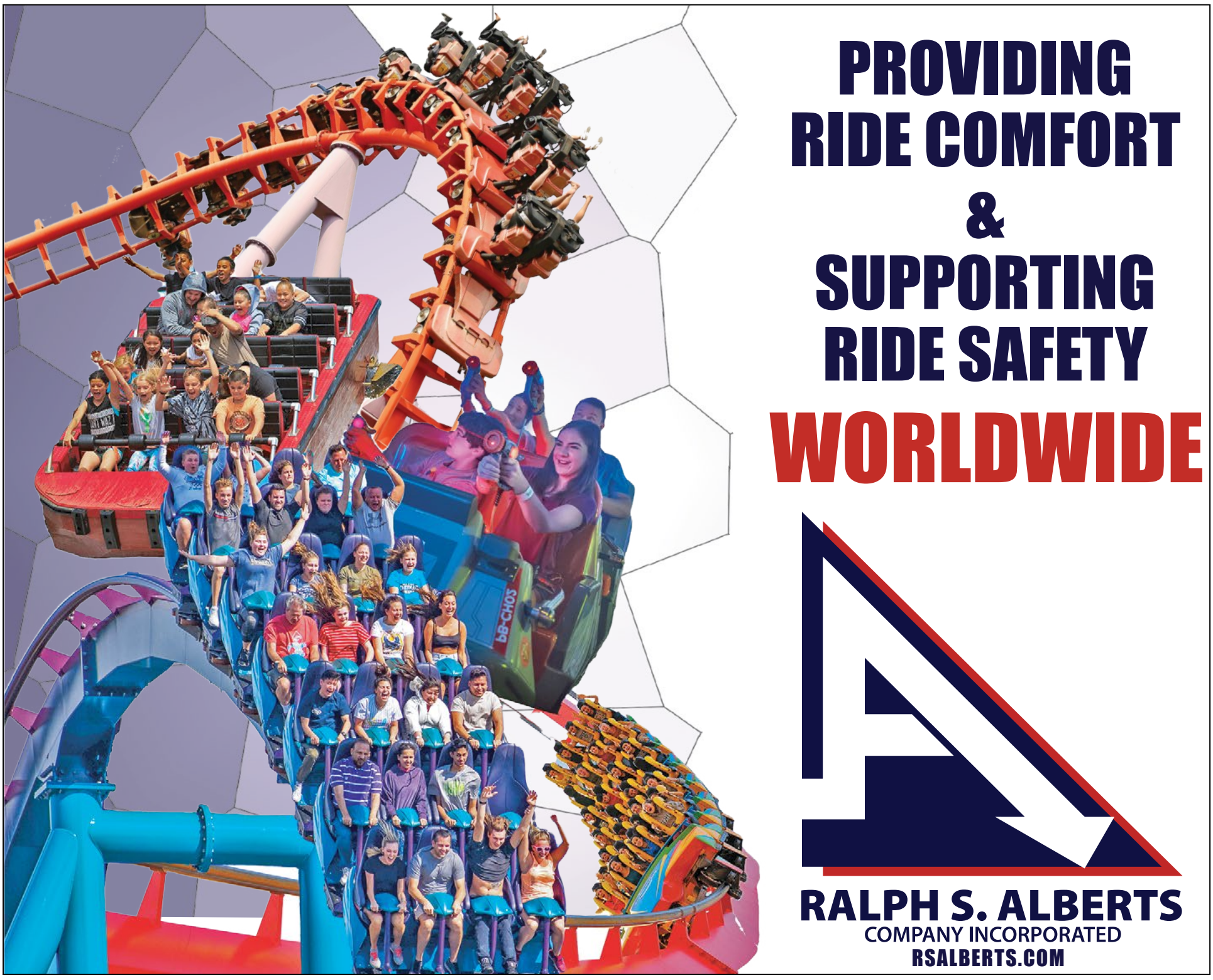
What concerns Long is that it marginalizes the three to five feet of water that can pose a major risk. This is particularly true in sloping pools. The "beach entry" pools are becoming much more popular with resorts. These can often feature an activity area that can often feed into a competitive area with deeper water.

"I'm a big advocate of putting a buoy line or visual marker that notates three feet," Long told *AT*. "What that does is that it brings awareness and places a barrier to where a child would have to go under it, but it helps parents and supervisors with the lifeguarding perspective of it. That barrier makes them associate differently. They might think of four or five feet as deep water and might not give that three-plus feet the attention it warrants."

Long also wishes state

See SHALLOW, page 40

Sloped bottoms of pools (above) can quickly put smaller children at risk. The difference between three feet of water and four feet of water dramatically changes when experienced by various ages of children. AT/TIM BALDWIN



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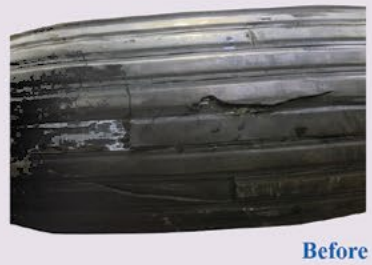
We offer complete Bumper Collar repair services to repair and refurbish your collars. Simply send us your damaged or worn collars and we will repair and refurbish them for you. Here are a few examples:



Before

After

After

SHALLOW

Continued from page 38

regulations would require more water depth signage. While it is required at the top of the pools, he is keenly aware that the elevation change in sloped pools can change quickly once individuals are in the water. Having depth education sooner and more prevalent can help both parents and the child.

"There are signs that indicate how tall a person must be to ride a slide, but we could do more as an industry in helping educate if a child is 'this tall' they should be able to comfortably stand in *this* depth of water," said Long. "And 'these pools' have this depth."

Buoy lines aren't possible in wave pools, but the recommendation of red lines or markings at the side are recommended safety measures.

"Each facility is different," Long said. "We look at each facility and say, 'What is a practical measure that will be effective?'"

Children can drown in any depth of water and should be supervised. Lifeguards shouldn't dismiss shallow water as low risk. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Currently, Long serves as the chair of the World Waterpark Association's Safety Committee. It is no surprise that safety is dear to his heart. Even with everything in place as it should be, his family suffered a traumatic experience with his two-year-old daughter nearly drowning in just over a foot of water.

"It was eye-opening as an operator," he said. "Anything can and will happen in any depth of water. I had been operating for 15-plus years at that point for some massive facilities: **Walt Disney World Resorts**, **Atlantis** in Dubai and some large seasonal operations in California. When that incident occurred, we had been open for three years with about a million and a half people in the water park each year and we had never had a true unresponsive, preventable drowning in that time. I don't think any lifeguard in that position had ever responded to any single incident — it was 14 inches of water."

Long tries to remove the personal aspects of the situation and examine the facts.

"We've got to keep our guard up. Things can truly happen anywhere," he said. "When you throw in the fact that she was wearing a lifejacket and really was supervised, but children do what they do and, in a blink, they get somewhere they shouldn't be."

When *AT* asked Long why the lifejacket didn't protect his daughter, he noted that lifejackets can be of different design. The nature of the jacket had flotation foam evenly distributed and she managed to go for something underwater and became trapped face down and didn't have the understanding to try to flip her body. Long explained some lifejackets have headrests that keep a toddler's and young child's head above the water.

Fortunately, with Long's wife and lifeguard on the scene, the situation was discovered, and life-saving procedures were implemented.

"It showed me we can never be *too* safe," Long said. "We need to be ready at all times. There are resources out there on water safety, and one I like is the height and growth chart to help use that visual, working off the assumption that six inches from the top of the head to the mouth. It's not the screaming or the 'wow' you watch on *Baywatch*, the reality is how subtle it is and how quickly it can happen. It's challenging for lifeguards because they have to determine what is playing and what is not. Just the nature of kids to want to know how far they can go. Anytime a child's head and neck are in a vertical position and kind of bobbing, that's something you need to pay attention to. That's what drowning looks like."

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Amuse staying busy on Knoebels' Twister, Hall of Fame wheel

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Amuse is retracking approximately 900 linear feet of the Twister's track at Knoebels. COURTESY OF KNOEBELS

COUR D'ALENE, Idaho — **Amuse** likes to tackle the big ones.

As one of the company's crew is winding and twisting its way retracking sections on the Twister wooden coaster at **Knoebels Amusement Resort**, Elysburg, Pennsylvania, another is busy installing a **Chance** wheel at the pro football **Hall of Fame Village,** Canton, Ohio.

"We don't really take time off during the winter," said Amuse's **Brandon Paul.**

He said they just keep going.

Brian Knoebel said Amuse started the Twister project in mid-November. He expects it to be complete later this month.

"Roughly 900 linear feet of track in the roller coaster's helix is being replaced this off-season, a project that spans within an area of 70 bents," Knoebel said. "(The project) will return the roller coaster to its original specs."

The Twister has been operating at Knoebels since 1999. The park built it using plans revised by **John Fetterman** from **John Allen's** plans for **Elitch Gardens'** Mr. Twister. Elitch Gardens is located in Denver, Colorado.

This is the second time Knoebels enlisted the help of Amuse, having partnered with the company in 2017-2018 for the Phoenix.

The wheel Amuse was installing at the Hall of Fame Village had previously been inside at the **International Exposition Center,** better known as the I-X Center, in Cleveland, Ohio. The 125-foot wheel had been the centerpiece at the center for 30 years.

The **Hall of Fame Resort and Entertainment Company** announced last April it was building a new 3.5-acre attraction called **Play-Action Plaza**. Along with the wheel, it will include a zipline, amphitheater and more.

Earlier this year Amuse retracked 200 feet of the Scream Machine at **Six Flags Over Georgia,** Austell, Georgia.

"We have a couple other future contracts that are currently been finalized," Paul said.

- **amuserides.com**
- **knoebels.com**

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WWA Trade Show offers safety approaches from various companies

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

LAS VEGAS — Last October, the **World Waterpark Association** Tradeshow and Symposium welcomed hundreds of operators from around the country, if not internationally. The expected water park suppliers and filtration specialists were there. Food options were on hand to provide samples. For those who took time to look at all the offerings from vendors, several provided products in terms of safety, and there were good solutions to be found.

Amusement Today talked to a few.

Ben Woody of PYI Inc. holds up a rock-climbing-attraction piece coated in the homogenous KiwiGrip material. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Shoes For Crews has been in business since 1984. Its business not only includes water park employees but also professionals in food service, industrial, hospitality, health care and public service.

"We specialize in nonslip safety footwear," said **Kevin Schlatterer**, senior business development representative. "Shoes For Crews was actually the first developer of a nonslip outsole. We really honed in the maximum coefficient of friction we can offer to minimize slips and falls and the costs associated with those accidents."

Impressively, Shoes For Crews offers more than 235 different styles. "That encompasses athletic, casual, dress and industrial," said Schlatterer. "We partner only with great partners that allow us to use our outsole on their shoes when it comes to dress shoes."

The company's mission is to get workers home safe — from individuals to entire teams. Its outsoles are not only slip-resistant but also oil-resistant.

SR Scales is a branch of **SR Instruments, Inc.**, which has been in business since 1973.

Scales have been positioned on various waterslides to make sure riders are enjoying the ride within the safety parameters set by the manufacturers.

Shoes For Crews has been in business for almost four decades providing slip-resistant footwear to various industries. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Mark Schulz, product manager of SR, explained that the company began working with the medical industry. "We branched out into veterinarian and zoological, and that market steered us to the water park market to get weight information out."

SR feels an ideal setting is where two sets of scales are implemented. One at the base of the ride informs guests before they climb slide towers. One at the top confirms to the ride operator that the group or rider is in compliance. In doing so, an indirect benefit is that lines work more efficiently by removing weight limit confusion when it is time to board.

"[Using scales] probably started about 15 years ago and has picked up steam in the past few years," said Schulz. "There were injuries that were weight related, so there has been a push for requirements for group rider limits and individual rider limits and getting people in cloverleaf tubes balanced properly."

A red light/green light system indicates to ride attendants if it is a "go or no go" situation.

"We don't actually show the weight of the guests. People are very familiar with that. It's not offensive in any way," he said. "They seem to understand that. Our secondary thing is that we can qualify individual riders or groups at the same time on the same scale, while also being able to position them based on weight.

Weather Guidance had a live radar at the tradeshow, allowing passersby to see the benefit of weather information on park operations.

"Site Warn is a service we provide," said **Rob White**, president. "The greatest concern for water parks is lightning strikes. While there are quote-unquote 'free' apps, most of the time the lightning data has some type of delay built in. Folks that want that data in real time are paying for that. We give folks that want to self-monitor that way with a basic service, which is only $9.95 a month and the data is instantaneous."

It was the first year for Weather Guidance to attend the show, and White said his booth had seen great interest.

"We have many water parks that are already customers, and we saw a great many of those folks here. We've met many new customers looking to start the service next season," he told *AT*.

Weather Guidance prides itself on not simply repackaging National Weather Service Warning information but preparing each alert or warning by highly trained members to provide accurate, precise and actionable weather information. Additional data layers such as temperatures, wind speed and direction, rainfall and other data are just clicks away with a mouse.

PYI Inc. is a leading manufacturer and distributor of high-quality marine, boat, yacht and ship equipment and supplies. It has been in business since 1981. However, it has a niche to gain the attention of water park operators.

One of its products is KiwiGrip nonskid coating system.

"Ours is a single-part nonskid. It's an acrylic base and the whole texture comes from the roller provided with the kits," said **Ben Woody**, sales. "Depending upon your technique, you can make it aggressive or less aggressive."

On display were elements from climbing wall interactive play.

"**Elevate** is a company that makes climbing walls, and they were looking for an alternative to what they were currently using on walls — they added sand to paint," explained Woody. "They found us, and KiwiGrip provided them with a lot of success."

Because KiwiGrip is a homogenous material, it doesn't suffer from problems when aggregate-based products that use sand, shells, rubber or other fillers wear through and fall out. In those situations, it is harder to clean and recoat. KiwiGrip is a solution to that.

- **shoesforcrews.com**
- **srinstruments.com**
- **weatherguidance.com**
- **pyiinc.com**

Safety supeheroes! Register for IRT's 2023 Ride Camp

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No it's Ride Camp! **International Ride Training**, has opened registration for their annual Safety School. Commonly known as Ride Camp, the event is scheduled for February 5-9, 2023, and will be held at the **Carowinds** theme park of Charlotte, South Carolina. This year's event theme is "Safety Is Your Super Power."

Led by an impressive faculty with decades of attractions industry experience, "Ride Camp Counselors" and other industry leaders will be teaching over 100 sessions, of which 40 are brand new, providing a highly immersive training experience focused on ride safety and operations best practices.

"We are excited because this year we are offering tracks for Level One for first time attendees, Level Two for middle operations management and Level Three for the leadership attendees," said **Cindee Huddy**, co-owner and managing member of IRT. "We have an action-packed week planned for IROC clients or businesses that operates rides and attractions, really anyone who is looking to enhance their Safety Super Powers."

Some of this year's educational sessions include ADA 101 for Operators, Assertiveness Skills and Practice for Leaders, Normalization of Deviance, Peeling the Operational Safety Onion, Efficiency Improvements, Train the Trainer Tips and Techniques, Aquatic Operator Procedure Practice, and many more.

Attendees, or "Campers," work both in the classroom and in hands-on training exercises using Carowinds' rides to put what they are learning into practice, including the 10 Critical Components. Up to 4 CEUs will be awarded from Tunxis College for those Campers who qualify to receive them.

As Batman's trusted sidekick Robin might say: "Holy roller coasters, Batman — Ride Camp is not to be missed!"

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Mobaro's Bromilow named Chairman of IAAPA Global Safety Committee

LONDON, U.K. — CMMS and Ride Operations software provider **Mobaro**'s **David Bromilow** has been named chairman of **IAAPA**'s Global Safety Committee.

It has been almost 45 years since Bromilow embarked on a multifaceted career in the amusement and attractions industry. From his early years as a mechanical engineer at **Blackpool Pleasure Beach**, technical risk management in **Lloyds** insurance markets, special effects and project management for big Hollywood productions and theme parks around the world to his current role as director of parks and attractions for Mobaro.

David Bromilow

Alongside Bromilow's formal career, his volunteering activity within industry committees, panels and boards is extensive, however the latest addition does indeed form a highpoint.

"Firstly, it is a sincere privilege to serve the IAAPA Global safety committee as Chairman. I have been a member of this prestigious group for several years and to be entrusted with its leadership if only for a couple of years gives me immense pride," stated Bromilow. "The work of this IAAPA Global committee and indeed the IAAPA regional safety sub committees is of tremendous value and importance to our industry and IAAPA members in terms of education and communication in all areas of safety affecting the parks and visitor attractions industry."

Overall, the Global safety committee is made up of amusement industry professionals from across the sector including park and attraction operators and suppliers. The committee meets in person twice per year to review and debate a wide range of matters in regards our industry with a focus on safety, and on an as-needed basis by the IAAPA executive in serving its members.

Chuck E. Cheese first FEC to earn the Ecolab Science Certified Seal

DALLAS, Texas — **Chuck E. Cheese** announced that it has earned the **Ecolab** Science Certified Seal for its commitment to cleanliness across more than 400 locations nationwide.

The seal signifies the company's dedication to advancing the safety and well-being of its guests and cast members by implementing science-based cleaning protocols in partnership with industry expert, Ecolab. Chuck E. Cheese is the first kid-focused family entertainment center to join the Ecolab program and receive the Ecolab Science Certified Seal. The company joins other restaurants and recreation centers in its commitment to creating a cleaner environment for families.

"Chuck E. Cheese is committed to creating a safe, clean and worry-free space for young families to build memories together, which includes upholding the highest standards of cleanliness across all our fun centers," said **David McKillips**, CEO at **CEC Entertainment, LLC**. "We are proud to be the first family entertainment center to join the Ecolab Science Certified program and leverage Ecolab's expertise to advance our commitment to the health and safety of our guests."

"We are proud Chuck E. Cheese joined the Ecolab Science Certified program, a global brand that provides an exceptional guest experience and is relentlessly focused on cleanliness and safety," said **Kris Kielsa**, executive vice president and general manager, institutional North America at Ecolab.

The program is founded in Ecolab's experience keeping hospitals, restaurants, hotels, sports and entertainment venues, and other businesses clean, and is informed by guidance from the world's leading health and safety organizations, such as the EPA, FDA, CDC and others.

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Wooster's Flex-Tred prevents slipping, keeps people on their feet

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Flex-Tred, a product manufactured by Wooster Products Inc., is ideal for the amusement industry as it is heavy duty, can be customized to fit any area, comes in a variety of colors and easy to install. COURTESY WOOSTER PRODUCTS

WOOSTER, Ohio — **Wooster Products Inc.** has been making anti-slip stair tread and walkway products since 1921, so it is no wonder that the company provides a full line of anti-slip products.

But, one of its products, Flex-Tred anti-slip tape has become one of its go-to products within the amusement industry. The reason, said **Jim Wahl,** president of **Wahl Marketing** that works with Wooster, the tape is not only durable, it also can be customized by die cutting to fit just about anywhere, indoors and outdoors.

"The tape is somewhat utilitarian," Wahl said. "It can be installed anywhere where you want people to have sure footing."

It is available in rolls of various widths, standard die cut shapes or in custom die cuts to suit specific requirements. It is heavy-duty and easy to install.

In addition, the tape can bend over sharp 90-degree angles without fracture and can be bent repeatedly without cracking or failure of the bond.

It can be installed on walkways, ramps, entrances and exits to rides and a multitude of other areas.

Wooster has been making Flex-Tred tape for a quite a while, but has continued to evolve the tape with different colors and patterns, which are available in their library.

Among the colors in which the tape is available are different fluorescent colors and Nite Glow glow-in-the-dark.

"It also is now offered in a clear version," Wahl said. "You have to be right on top of it to see it."

In areas where a heavy exposure to liquids is anticipated, Wahl said Wooster offers a Flex-Tred Edge Sealing Compound.

Applied Flex-Tred is resistant to motor oil, detergent, hydraulic oil and UV. It will tolerate steam and detergent cleaning and is essentially unaffected by climactic exposure and mild acid or alkali exposure under normal conditions.

It has a useful temperature range of -40°F to 220°F and will tolerate limited exposure to temperatures above 220°F.

"Once it is down, it is permanent," Wahl said.

Wooster Products' first product was Alumogrit (cast aluminum), which it began making in 1921. It was 1956 before it added a second product, its Supergrit (extruded aluminum). Spectra and Stairmaster, also extruded aluminum products, were added in 1956 and 1961, respectively.

Flex-Tred was added in 1976 and Nite Glow was added in 1996.

Today, its full line safety treads and walkway products includes all of the above as well as Flexmaster, another extruded aluminum product, coatings (WP-70, Walk-A-Sured and Safe-Stride) and a whole line of photoluminescent (glow-in-the-dark) nosings and treads (Nite Glow).

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LJM's commitment to service remains strong under new ownership

AT: *David Fake*
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — It was at the **IAAPA** Expo in November 2022 that **Lewis Merz** and **Rob Gavel** sat down and signed paperwork within the *Amusement Today* booth. There was no flashy media announcement, official declaration or fanfare, yet that moment signified the beginning of a new chapter in the **LJM and Associates, Inc.** story, marking the official transfer of ownership of the company from Merz to Gavel.

The seed of the sale was planted more than a year ago when Merz, then president and owner, approached Gavel, then a subcontractor for LJM, to ask if he would be interested in purchasing the company.

It was not long after that Merz was desperately looking for a replacement for his office manager. Gavel's wife, **Darlene Gavel**, stepped in without hesitation, offered her skills and volunteered to run the office for Merz.

"[Darlene] has been handling all of the invoicing, banking, payables and things like that. So, it really allowed us an opportunity to just really get a feel for how the company runs," said Gavel. "It really helped Lewis, and it has been a good thing for us, too."

Lewis Merz (left) and Rob Gavel sign paperwork officially transferring ownership from Merz to Gavel in the *Amusement Today* booth at the 2022 IAAPA Expo. AT/GARY SLADE

Gavel's history with inspections started with the State of Maryland in 2008, when he applied for an elevator inspection role.

"They thought I'd be a better fit with amusement rides. So, as an amusement ride inspector, I got out there going to **National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials** [NAARSO], just getting to know a few of the bigger picture of the industry outside of the state. Over time, I took some promotions, ultimately becoming the chief inspector for Maryland's amusement rides division. I eventually became program manager, which oversees the elevator, boiler, amusement rides, and railroad inspections for the State of Maryland. Then in 2016, I started doing some part-time, third-party work with LJM and a little bit of my own work which led me to creating my own business," explained Gavel.

Between his work for the State, subcontractor work for LJM and his own business, *Gavel Consulting Services, LLC*, Gavel remained quite busy. So much so, that in 2018 he left his role with Maryland to go full-time with his subcontracting and consulting business focusing on corporate safety, safety inspections and some carnivals.

"When I started doing-third party inspections full-time, it was mostly work for LJM, but also with a few clients on my own. Then over time, and it wasn't very long ago, Lewis and I had started talking about me purchasing the company. Then over the course of the last year, we have been working with him and running the company. And we just settled the deal last month at IAAPA, and now Lewis will stay on acting as a subcontractor for the company," Gavel said.

"[Lewis will] be going out and doing work, just like the other associates, but he's always there to help guide a little bit. He has such a large amount of knowledge of the history of the industry, that it would be really difficult to not have someone like that supporting you for a while. It will be up to him to determine how long," Gavel added.

A project the two have been collaborating on for some time is a propriety system that can be used in the field that will take away much of the time-consuming paperwork and allow LJM to get feedback back to their customers much more expediently.

"One of the things that we really were concerned about was the amount of time that we were spending on turning around reports and getting notes back to the clients. Our work doesn't feel as though its much good to go out there and conduct an inspection, if we can't get the notes and recommendations back to the client in a timely fashion.

"So, Lewis and I started discussing this probably four years ago, and we sat down one evening when somebody pointed out it was some type of a programming system that we needed. But there was nothing that was 'off-the-shelf' that I could find that was an inspection program that would work for us. So, we got on the meeting and [Merz] said, 'Do you think you think we can do this?' And I said, 'Sure!'

"Honestly, I had no real clue how to do it. I had zero background in programming. But we sat down, talked a little bit. And then I started. I was doing YouTube videos and reading books, working on trying to program a new app to bring out to help to our clients.

"It took about a year, but with the help of a developer to clean up everything that I messed up, we were able to roll it out.

"It is basically a framework programming system that is good at building databases and producing reports. And that's what we really do – we collect information and we submit reports," explained Gavel.

That first version of the app worked well and has taken away hours of work that were spent typing documents and processing reports.

With the help of the app, when an associate is done at

▸ **See LJM, page 52**

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LJM

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an inspection site, they simply do a quick proofread of the information they entered into the app, then it generates a report for the client within 30 seconds – as compared to the hours it previously took to manually complete the forms.

"We're now coming out with the second generation of the app, hopefully, in late February. It will not only allow us to produce reports for the client but customize them more to what the client wants. It produces the jurisdictional documents for rides like Texas AR-100s and Florida affidavits. It'll be auto populated for us, so we don't have to sit there and type in individual pieces of information. So, that's what's next for us," said Gavel.

LJM and Associates, Inc. proudly sponsored AIMS 2021 in Galveston, Texas. COURTESY LJM AND ASSOCIATES

While looking to the future, Gavel has forgotten the past. He is quick to express his highest regard for Merz's mentorship over the years, as well as expressed his gratitude for Merz's help and approach to the transition process.

"Throughout this whole process from the very moment we discussed the possible sale, he has made this process as easy as could be and has been a completely open book. It has been one of the more pleasant negotiations I think I've ever been involved in, just because he's run this company with an eye towards taking care of the clients.

"You know, there is one thing I'd like to impress our clients, and anyone out there is that LJM has always been and will always be a client-centric company where we're dedicated to making sure that they get the very best service possible.

"That comes from Lewis. That started with him. He's been in this industry for 30 years, at least. He's built a reputation for being conscientious and giving his all to make sure that he does the job the best he can. Watching that since coming out full time in 2018, it's reinforced to me that that's what the company needs to be moving forward, too. Because it's about protecting not just your client but people," concluded Gavel.

Gavel promised that LJM is now still very much the same company it was before the change in ownership, offering the same high-caliber safety inspection services it has for 20 years. And while Gavel attributes the seamless transition and future success as wholly attributed to the leadership style of Merz in his years as owner of LJM, it is also Gavel's like-minded business philosophy, commitment to high standards and his client-first approach as he takes the reigns of the company that will ensure LJM's future success.

Steady, methodical, conscientious and thorough has been LJM's approach to inspections under Merz. Gavel is committed and well-prepared to deliver at that same level as he builds upon the solid foundation and keystone Merz has laid.

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Commitment to safety on display throughout IAAPA Expo 2022

AT: *Susan Storey*
Special to Amusement Today

Safety is, and always has been, the number-one priority of the global attractions industry. With the largest gathering of industry professionals coming together for **IAAPA Expo 2022,** so too was the opportunity to further safety conversations and discuss harmonizing standards. IAAPA Expo exhibitor vendors and suppliers shared a few thoughts about safety for their clients and the industry with *Amusement Today*.

Leading control system integrator, **Birket Engineering**, which specializes in life-safety ride and show control systems for the parks and other attractions, made sure that during conversations on the trade show floor, the team fully understood potential client needs was always coupled with keeping safety top of mind. The week in Orlando reflected the success the company had experienced in 2022 and gave a peek into what's to come.

Steve Birket shared, "2023 looks to be another great year for the parks and new projects. We had the best IAAPA Expo ever. Attention to safety is always the number-one priority, of course. Each new project brings a heightened emphasis on safety design and testing practice."

Steve Lee, Gorilla Lube

Birket's experiences and thoughts were echoed by other exhibitors who found some attendees' and buyers' focuses seemed to be shifting toward making changes that improve safety of the environment, as well as that of guests and ride operation.

As president of **Gorilla Lube, Steve Lee** has manufactured bio-based, USDA-certified products for many years. Specializing in bio-based product research, design, development and manufacturing, the family-owned company has worked closely with the USDA BioPreferred program since 2002. Gorilla's company lubricants are non-toxic, reduce run-off and drip from chains, and use eco-friendly products that do not harm plants, soil, or the water supply, nor are they lethal if accidentally ingested by animals. Most importantly though, Lee is quick to point out, "Our products work better, and reduce costs for our customers."

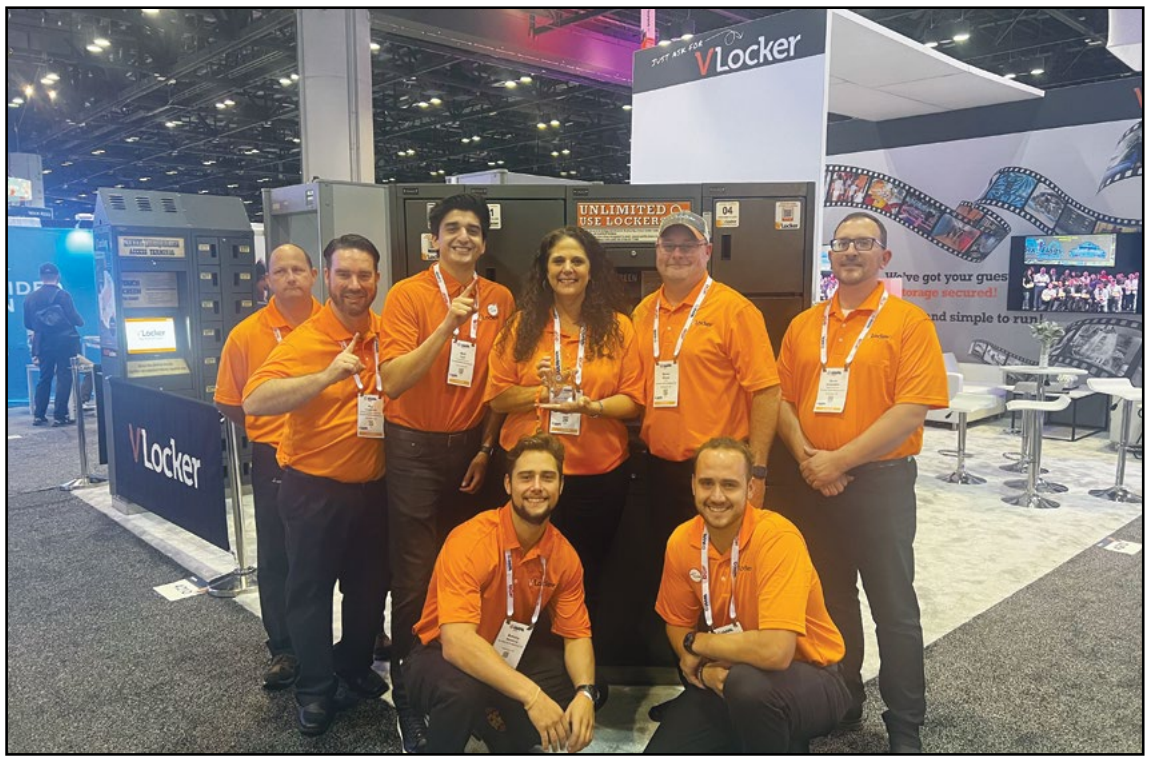
Galaxy Multi Rides requires extensive safety and operations education for all new customers when selling and installing one of its attractions. COURTESY GALAXY MULTI RIDES

Lee was pleased with the traffic and conversations held during IAAPA Expo and shared that he saw a significant change on the floor this year versus previous.

"Potential new customers came to us seeking products that would get the job done *and* are environmentally safe," he continued. "While in years past, many may have viewed our green initiatives as a bonus to meeting their needs; buyers this year came to us seeking environmentally conscious solutions up front that could improve their overall operations."

"We are the only lubricant that is bio-based; it works and is safe," Lee shared. "And while we typically work with clients that have roller coasters, we also support ski resorts and their ski lifts. You can say our ethos is to work better, reduce cost, protect the environment and set industry standards. It was great to have people proactively come to us to discuss how they can become more environmentally friendly without having to sacrifice quality. We were ready to provide the answer!"

Reflecting on the overall week itself, Lee added, "It was also nice to meet in person again. Last year, I thought most of us were still a bit unsure about how to navigate close engagement, and what it would be like coming back together for a trade show. This year it was good to shake hands, have relaxed conversations and focus on moving forward."



The staff of VLocker celebrated a successful IAAPA Expo as well as the company's 2022 Brass Ring Award for Best Booth Design. COURTESY VLOCKER

For **VLocker North America**, safety and security go hand in hand. A global manufacturer of electronic lockers for over 30 years, VLocker has been a leader in creating lockers that not only keep park guests' valuables safe, but also provide a crucial solution for operators dealing with the ongoing issue of personal items dropping from moving rides. Its innovative double-sided electronic lockers provide a seamlessly simple answer to helping operators prevent items such as cell phones and keys from being carried onboard by ride guests.

"Our staff is proud to partner with clients to help develop the right locker solution for their park," said **Steven Wooley**, chief operating officer, VLocker. "It's important to all of us that we provide products that are easy to install and deliver peace of mind for parks and their guests."

An extra surprise this year, VLocker was presented with the 2022 IAAPA Brass Ring Award for Best Booth design in their exhibit size classification. The entirely new booth layout displayed Vlocker's original dual-sided Ride Locker solution and welcomed

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SAFETY

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new and current customers to easily meet with the team and discuss goals and plans for 2023 and beyond.

Amidst the sounds and smells of the tradeshow floor, attendees once again saw the latest in bright, imaginative and innovative fun for inflatable parks and attractions. And with each bounce and high jump, the most important aspect to creating — and selling — inflatable parks is keeping safety at the forefront of everything.

AIMS International announced a new partnership with ACOLAP as well as expanded program offerings for its annual ride safety seminar. COURTESY AIMS INTERNATIONAL

"It sounds cliche´, but safety comes first at Galaxy. It is a core concept we present to every customer from the first conversation," shared **Mike Whincup**, head of design and marketing, **Galaxy Multi Rides**. "As a designer of attractions, I could not sleep at night knowing that I hadn't done everything possible to make our rides and attractions as safe as possible. This is why we require new customers to view a set up and operational instruction video, fully read and understand the operations manual and take a safety test to activate their product warranty.

"With our Inflatable Park installations, we also provide and facilitate a complete day dedicated to educating and training the owners and operational staff on every single attraction in the park," he continued "This ensures the end user — the park's guests — remain top of mind. It is an important aspect of our company profile and customer service and remains a sales tool that differentiates us from others. The culture of safety from design to operation is a consistent theme Galaxy carries with customers from the very beginning."

Just as Galaxy Multi Rides provides safety training to its clients, ongoing safety education is critical for operators to maintain proper safety compliance, standards and reporting across all aspects of the industry. From the tradeshow floor, **AIMS International** signed a three-year agreement with the **Colombian Association of Attractions and Amusement Parks** (ACOLAP) to provide a comprehensive amusement ride safety education program to ACOLAP members *(See story, page 60).*

Mary Jane (MJ) Brewer, executive director, **AIMS International,** reflected on the significance of announcing the monumental step toward increasing international industry safety education during IAAPA Expo.

"As the world leader in amusement safety education, it is our responsibility to stay at the forefront of the industry's needs," said **MJ Brewer**, executive director, **AIMS International**. "In addition to this new partnership with ACOLAP, we also shared further details about expanding the program and offerings for our annual safety seminar for the third consecutive year."

Referring to the 2023 AIMS International Safety Seminar, the expanded program now includes over 300 hours of educational content which will be offered during the 2023 AIMS International Safety Seminar. The annual event

See SAFETY, page 56

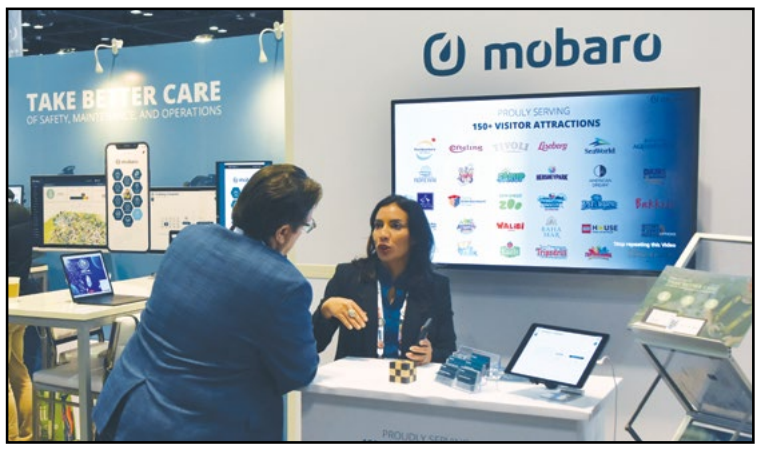
While tradeshow exhibit booths are not exactly part of Ellis's daily commitment to accountability-based, results-driven aquatic safety programs, the company was proud to earn a 2022 IAAPA Brass Ring Award for Best Booth.
COURTESY ELLIS & ASSOCIATES

SAFETY

Continued from page 55

will be held January 8-13, 2023, in Galveston, Texas.

Throughout Expo week, plans were made to attend facilitated learning, new international programs, and to take part in ongoing educational opportunities in 2023, but it was the camaraderie and shared passion that often led to the most memorable conversations.



Premier Rides President Jim Seay believes that safety is the cornerstone of the amusement industry and many of his discussions center around new technologies, best practices and lessons learned (above left). Multiple buyers along the IAAPA show floor showed interest in the safety and inspection software offered by Mobaro (above right).
AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

"The IAAPA Expo is one of the best settings the industry has for informal safety exchanges. By design, there is no better industry networking environment than a trade show where manufacturers and operators are all talking with each other about the past year of operations and the years ahead," shared **Jim Seay**, president **Premier Rides, Inc**. "As safety is the cornerstone of the amusement industry, many of the discussions center around new technologies, best practices and lessons learned that continue to raise the bar for safe operations globally."

A strong pledge to safety and safety training is more than a core value at Ellis and Associates, Inc.; it is the only way to do business. The world leader in aquatic safety since 1983, Ellis's dedicated team has one unified mission: zero drownings.

During the IAAPA Expo, **Richard "RAC" Carroll**, senior vice president and chief operating officer for **Ellis & Associates**, Inc., shared, "In the past three years we have seen record attendance at our International Aquatic Safety School and this year had the opportunity to meet many new faces of longtime clients that were attending IAAPA Expo for the first time. We expanded our booth and offered 15-minute Aqua Talks each day of the Expo discussing a range of topics from pool and ride inspections to leveraging new safety technology. The Aqua Talks were open to anyone and what we loved the most was the number of younger professionals that showed up eager to learn more about safety and the aquatics industry."

And while tradeshow exhibit booths are not exactly part of Ellis's daily commitment to accountability-based, results-driven aquatic safety programs, the company was proud to earn a 2022 IAAPA Brass Ring Award for Best Booth in their exhibit size classification.

The global attractions industry's commitment to safety is evident not only on the tradeshow floor but in practice, every day, at parks around the world, and on the smiling faces of the millions of guests who enjoy them.

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aimsintl.org/aims-international-safety-seminar

•

IAAPA FEC Summit
January 22 - 24, 2023
Nashville, Tennessee
iaapa.org/events/connections/summit/fec-summit-2023

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NAARSO Safety School
January 28 - February 3, 2023
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
naarso.com/safety-seminars

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2023 IISF Trade Show & Extravaganza
February 13 - 17, 2023
Gibsonton, Florida
gibtownshowmensclub.com

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International Ride Training Ride Camp
February 5 - 9, 2023
Charlotte, North Carolina
ridetraining.com/ride-camp-register

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Northwestern Showmen's Club Safety Seminar
February 20 - 24, 2023
Portland, Oregon
nwshowmensclub.com

•

Pennsylvania Amusement Ride Safety Seminar
February 28 - March 2, 2023
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
paridesafety.com

•

Amusement Expo International
March 27 - 30, 2023
Las Vegas, Nevada
amusementexpo.org

•

Roller Skating Convention & Trade Show
April 30 - May 4, 2023
Las Vegas, Nevada
rollerskating.com/pages/convention

•

IAAPA Expo Asia
June 13 - 16, 2023
Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia

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International Bowl Expo
June 25 - 29, 2023
Las Vegas, Nevada
bpaa.com/expoexhibitors

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AIMS, ACOLAP partner deliver safety education in Colombia

During IAAPA Expo 2022, AIMS International announced its partnership with ACOLAP. COURTESY AIMS INTERNATIONAL

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — **AIMS International**, and **Colombian Association of Attractions and Amusement Parks** (ACOLAP), have signed an agreement to provide a comprehensive amusement ride safety education program to ACOLAP members and affiliate members working in Colombia and neighboring countries.

The three-year deal calls for an amusement safety education program to be delivered annually by amusement industry safety experts entirely in Spanish. This unique hybrid program, will take place in for the first time in February of 2023, and be offered in three segments:

- A 40-hour series of on-demand video courses.
- A live webinar series giving attendees the chance to interact with subject matter experts during a live review and Q&A session.
- A hands-on experience at a local Bogota amusement park, with live demonstrations by subject matter experts which allows ACOLAP attendees to see in-person what they learned in the video courses.

The on-demand video courses will be pre-recorded in Spanish during the January 2023 AIMS International Safety Seminar in Galveston, Texas, and made available to ACOLAP attendees via the AIMSconnectED online learning platform.

Attendees may also sit for an in-person AIMS International certification exam, delivered in Spanish, in any one of the following areas: Ride Inspection, Maintenance, Operations or Aquatics.

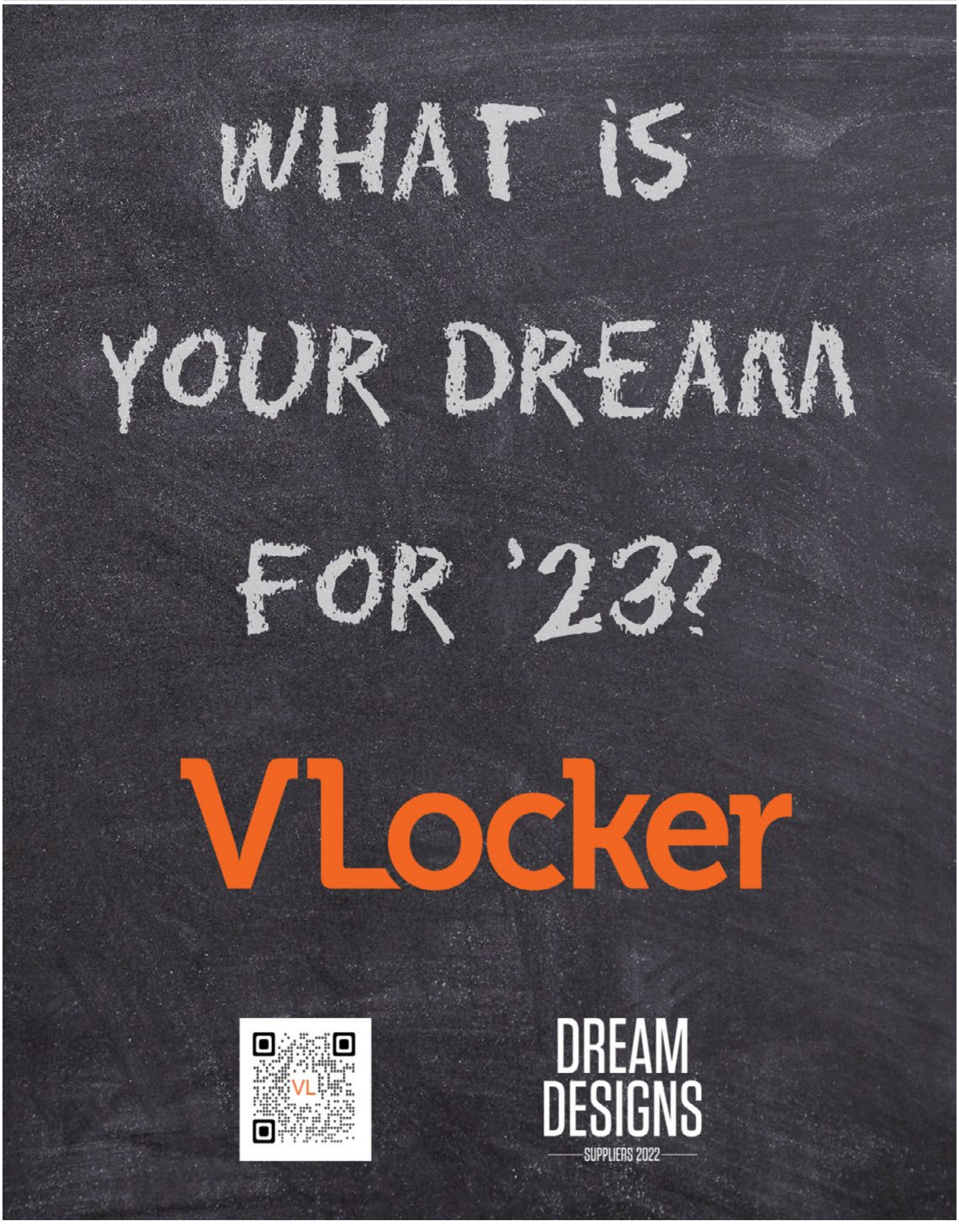
"From ACOLAP we are happy that this project is finally a reality, "said **Angela Dias**, ACOLAP executive director, of the landmark agreement. "It represents a great contribution to the safety of amusement parks in Colombia."

Mary Jane Brewer, AIMS International Executive Director, agreed: "The staff and board of directors of AIMS International are thrilled to have the opportunity to expand our safety education programming into Latin America. We are grateful to Angela Dias and the team at ACOLAP for working so hard to make this dream a reality."

AIMS is also indebted to **Hugo Loyola**, corporate process manager at **Fantasilandia Park** in Santiago Chile, an AIMS board member, for coordinating the curriculum and the Latin American instructors who are teaching the educational content.

The first of the three annual safety education programs is scheduled to take place in February, with the in-person hands-on experience and certification exams planned for the February 24 and 25, 2023, in Bogota, Colombia.

• aimsintl.org



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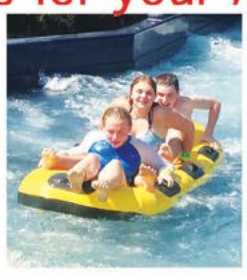

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Richard D'Aprile at (727) 421-3569 (cell)
or visit RunwayFunPark.com

OPPORTUNITY

Morgan's Wonderland

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Candidates should submit their resume to:
morganswonderland.com/about-us/employment/

OPPORTUNITY

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Amusement industry law practice The Sheehan Firm's dedication to client support has led to opening an office in Orlando, Florida, The practice is in search of two additional attorneys for the new office.

Attorneys interested in joining
The Sheehan Firm
should submit their resume to
Thomas Sheehan at tom@ridelaw.com

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2023 MEDIA PLANNER

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Mt. Olympus debuts first SlideWheel in North America
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Six Flags Magic Mountain shatters barrier with 20 roller coasters
Zamperla provides spinning coasters on opposite sides of globe

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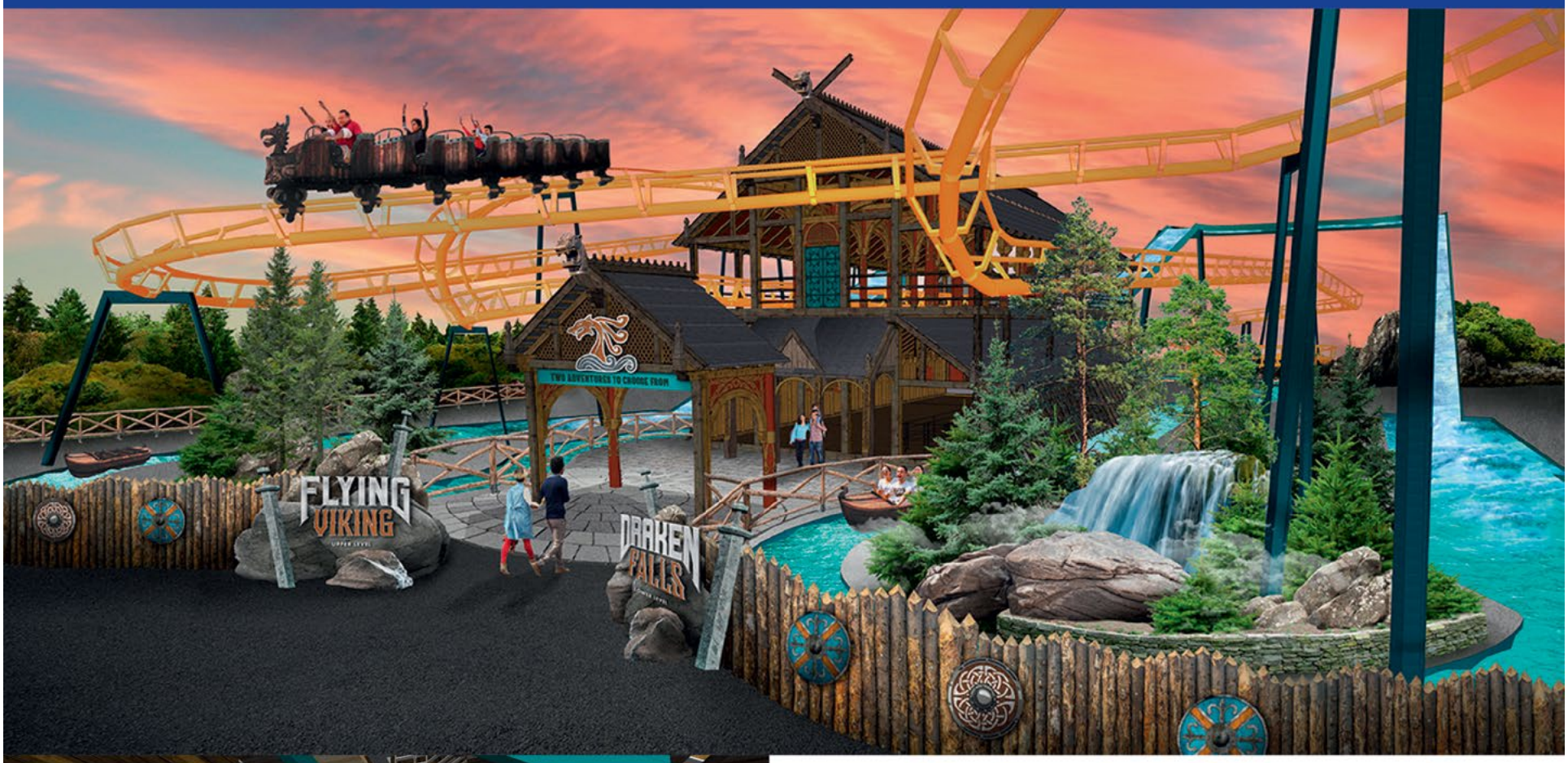

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Junior Coaster

Minimum height requirement of 36" accompanied.

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Super Flumez

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